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Uniwersytet Śląski



Katowice 1985

The Outlined Shadow

Phenomenology • Grammatology • Blake

THE OUTLINED SHADOW
Phenomenology, Grammatology, Blake

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UNIWERSYTETU ŚLĄSKIEGO
W KATOWICACH
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Tadeusz Ślawek

The Outlined Shadow

Phenomenology
Grammatology
Blake

Uniwersytet
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The purpose of this work does not yield itself to a one word determination. It is not the author's complacency that rings in this statement but the opposite — his uncertainty and humility. First of all, this work stems from the conviction that it is impossible to speak of literature without speaking of philosophy, not because literature can be a spokesman of a specific philosophical school, but because a philosophical, ontological, reflection can be unconcealed in sentences of a literary text. The term "unconcealment" which will recur in these essays denotes that the ontological reflection has not been purposefully hidden or coded in words we read as literature, but it only humbly suggests that such a reflection can unexpectedly appear, what is more, has to appear in the space of understanding stretching between the reader and the text.

Literature is a question of distance and dispersion: the impossible to remove (contrary to what consecutive avant-guards claim) distance between literature (art) and life, a book and its reader, and the equally irreducible distance between the reader and the world, the relentless dispersion of readers.

Thus, we cannot escape philosophy: the aesthetically shaped form of the text works on the principle of augmenting, intensifying the material of reality, and this intensification can go so far that the aforementioned distance seems to disappear. The understanding we were talking about is also self-understanding. Literature could be defined from this hermeneutic point of view as the

The (pre) Face of the Text

Truth has bounds. Error none.
— William Blake, *The Book of Los*

Art is worth more than "the truth".

— Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*

strategy of such an amplification of reality, such its intensification that reality becomes fictitious. With an eye on a paradox it is possible to say that art is real to the extent it shows the unreality of reality.

It is precisely at this point when the element of surprise at the unconcealment of something so far hidden comes in. This element is, according to Hans-Georg Gadamer, more profound than a mere anticipation of meaning:

It is what I would like to call surprise at the meaning of what is said. The experience of art does not only understand a recognizable meaning, as historical hermeneutics does in its handling of texts. The work of art that says something confronts us itself. That is, it expresses something in such a way that what is said is like a discovery, a disclosure of something previously concealed. The element of surprise is based on this. «So true, so filled with» [*So wahr, so seiend*] is not something one knows in any other way. Everything familiar is eclipsed. To understand what the work of art says to us is therefore a self-encounter.¹

Reality teaches us that literature opens the problem of distance; however when intensifying and, finally, subverting reality literature appears in all its nearness, existential proximity to man. This introduces a *par excellence* philosophical issue: what is this awkward essent which oscillates between distance and nearness, the essent that can exist only in the distance but through a peculiar proximity, and what is the nature of its being? In other words, the question we are asking bears a shifted accent and reads "what IS literature?". Any act of reading is, then, necessarily an act of the philosophical reflection. This poses a serious problem the author is painfully aware of: if reading literature is philosophising on literature, to be personally involved in the is-ness of literature, to what extent this philosophical re-reading can be undertaken by one who is not a professional philosopher. It is a trap lurking in literature that is inherently, ontologically philosophical, but its readers, in enormous percentage, do not have at their disposal the apparatus of philosophical thinking.

From this predicament also stems this work which hinges upon the elements of phenomenology of Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and deconstruction of Jacques Derrida. Their philosophy determined the network of ontological references of these essays (as the author believes that ontology of the work of art is prior to its aesthetics), although the philosophical lexicon of the thinkers has been reduced to a few concepts seminal for the interpretative bias reflected in this book. Hence, in no way can remarks on Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty or Derrida be treated as a comprehensive introduction to their systems. This is a task in which professional philosophers would be, by far, more successful; the author uses Heidegger's and Derrida's categories not to be rigorously philosophical

(which he cannot be), but to call forth an intellectual landscape in which a work of art, an object, can be studied as a manifestation of a certain ontological-architectural style (a Greek temple in Heidegger, a labyrinth in Derrida). Following Derrida's etymological inventiveness we could refer to this part of my work as to "archi-ontology" (after "archi-écriture" in Derrida's *De la grammatologie*).

This concept redefines the notion of architecture as useful not only as a metaphor of the external construction of ideas, of the facade of thinking, but also as the outcome of a certain structure of passion it represents, a metaphorically coded hierarchy of elements constituting human psyche. The labyrinth and the temple do not only convey different ideas of the world, but, first of all, they take off from the two different worlds that are interpreted in terms of ideas. As Sarah Kofman puts it in her Nietzsche book:

[...] toute construction [...] est l'expression d'une architecture interne, c'est-à-dire d'une certaine hiérarchisation des instincts.²

It is important to keep this double meaning of architecture in mind since its first version (multiplicity of ideas) suggests the uniqueness of the world which is a subject of predication. A "truth" of the one world lies behind the ideas. The other reading emphasizes the plurality of worlds with as many ideas the truths of which are equally real and fictitious. While "architecture" signifies a truth we live **in** (one specified, well-described and controlled world), "archi-ontology" denotes a truth we live **with** (it guides us through the plurality of worlds). As Nietzsche has articulated it in *The Will to Power*:

Metaphysics, morality, religion, science — in this book these things merit consideration only as various forms of lies: with their help one can have faith in life.³

In other words, this book listens to and waits upon the philosophy of the act of appearing of an object, of its sudden and irreversible emergence from what preceded it and which, only very inaccurately, can be described as Nothingness. Both thinkers would energetically oppose this term: Heidegger saw in what preceded an object the area of original collection (*Sammlung*), of the gathering of things in one domain of Being; Derrida holds such a concept of Being untenable and introduces the absence of the transcendental signified as a key element of his philosophy. Nevertheless, be it from the original Presence of Logos (Heidegger), or from the repetitive non-Presence of writing (Derrida) objects appear to face man, and it is this moment of the initial coming into being which constitutes the focus of these essays.

The word "to face" can also reveal its nominal aspect: the object

appears to face man only by showing him its face which is a trace of the beyond, the place of origin of the thing. The text, the object, as the face becomes intelligible only in relationship with what it brings to us, with the area that "cannot be converted into the present as beginning, commencement, origin which are the lived modes of egoity".⁴ The text as the face, as appearing, presents itself in the order (writing) in which it cannot be fully understood, but it is only in this order that the Other, as Levinas would put it the "illeity", of the text, its fundamental background, can become a subject of discourse. The theory informing this book leaves aside the structuralist conviction that the text can remain thoroughly locked and rationalized within its interior, its tendency towards synchronicity and reductionism. What is studied is the appearing of an object as the first contour, the first differentiation, the most essential difference between the object and what is its ontological background against which we have to see it.

This mode of perceiving the object as a first stroke of a pen, a first sign, a first movement of a hand along the *via rupta* of writing, allows us to make a transition from Derrida's concept of *écriture* to Blake's theory of drawing. Both theories are to an equal degree studies of the graphic notation and the codified symbols of Weltanschauung, investigations of script as well as ciphers of ontological foundations. The liaison between the two readings of script, or rather unavoidable translating of one into the other, is where the aesthetic theory of Blake is interpreted as a graphic strategy originating from ontological premises which, although frequently unspecified and unwritten, are crucial for understanding of the graphic structure. Interpreting ontology out of the graphic notation (which never is merely a graphic notation) is one of the main purposes of this study.

Interpretation itself is considered a necessary mediation between the two spheres, a mode of explicating the Heideggerian "leap" of the first graphic mark from the totality of Being into the space of a page, or the Derridian "difference" separating one trace (signifiant) from another. In both cases interpretation is a reading of blank spaces, it is embedded in the between-ness of a sign and its origin (Heidegger), or a sign and another sign (Derrida). This is but a more verbose way of saying that also interpretation as a mediation, a substitution, a certain blankness, is writing; not a conclusive reading which definitely closes the perspective of a text but a hesitant imposing of a word upon another word, not THE text, but merely an INTER-text between and over another text.

This may explain the inevitable circularity of these essays. Approaching interpretation as a labyrinthine movement of signifiants where roads are necessarily doubled and recoiled upon themselves these texts cannot but share this feature, this awareness that they are merely pre-texts, pre-faces to other, yet unwritten, discourses. As Jacques Derrida puts it:

The preface, a synthetic mode of exposition, a discourse of themes, theses, and conclusions here as always precedes the analytic text of invention, which will in fact have come before it but which cannot, for fear of remaning unreadable, present or teach itself on its own.⁵

Thus, these essays branch off from an uneasily circular situation: the objects in front of us are inevitably external and yet it is ourselves who, through our relationship with them, establish them in their reality. This is the very essence of Merleau-Ponty's **perception**, although more aptly it could be described as a certain fundamental irony. Frederick Jameson sees its tradition in the German Romantic concept of irony as developed by Friedrich Schlegel, but he does not hesitate to extend its principle from the field of aesthetics unto ontology:

Irony thus characterizes our relationship to the work of art insofar as, knowing that the surface before us is an imaginary representation and the result of someone else's labor, we nonetheless consent to lose ourselves in it as though it were real [...]. In the same way, irony governs our relationship to the external world, for there is something paradoxical about an object, or a world in general, which is by definition external inasmuch as we have to have a relationship to it, but which is at the same time of the same substance of ourselves in so far as we can have a relationship to it.⁶

In other words, if we set off from the principle of the hermeneutic irony it will become obvious that world will reveal not only its compositional aspects ("[...] in considering the feeling one must consider it from the point of view of composition, just as in trying to understand a motor one must look at the drive-belt as a detail in a machine [...]")⁷. The literary fact will also reveal our involvement in it without which no "objective" analysis could have been possible. Thus, interpretation is a larger mode of being-with-the-world which entails both Shklovsky's "detachment" and Worringer's "empathy". It is only logical to conclude that the interpreter always speaks from within his entanglement in the fact he is interpreting, thus turning it into a dynamic event and markedly influenced by it. If Shklovsky's principle of estrangement is to hold in hermeneutics it has to undergo the Swiftian test of self-alienation: it is not only astonishment with a thing seen anew, but also a realization that it entails a change in my perception of myself. This interpreter and the interpreted are gathered in the territory that overcomes such technical and operational divisions, and which established its own framework of references. Both the interpreted and interpreter are brought together in writing (*écriture*) which refuses to recognize one central point dominating its field, and celebrates the multivocality of signs reverberating in other signs. The situation of the hermeneut in a centerless world of *signifiants* can be described as a general reorientation of his position from the one which made much welcome of

the strictly enumerated elements of reality and tried to establish causative links between them securing the over-all sense of direction, to the one where "rigid connections" are replaced by clusters of potential combinations. With a characteristic intellectual bravado and a no less typical eye on the accoustic metaphor Marshall McLuhan inscribes this hermeneutic reorientation in his pattern of technological changes:

In the instantaneous world of information movement we live once more in Echoland. Everything bounces off everything. The whole world resonates. «Resonance» has become the privileged centennial metaphor of our time, since Heisenberg applied the term to the behaviour of matter in physics and chemistry in 1927.⁸

A considerable and most provocative part of modern aesthetics derives from and addressess itself to the ear rather than to the eye. Hence in Malevich's statements on poetry it is the accoustic pattern that underlies semantics:

[...] the sign, or letter, depends on the rhythm and tempo. Rhythm and tempo create and take those sounds which they give birth to, and fashion a new image out of nothing.⁹

Similarly, the avant-garde production of Raoul Duguay is founded upon the mutual overlapping of vibratory fields:

Everthing that is, vibrates. Everything that vibrates has a sound. Even silence has a vibration. If one or a number of persons discover the source of this vibration, there is transparence. Transparence is the art of vibrating at the same pitch [...] as the thing or the person with whom one is trying to communicate.¹⁰

Criticism could not remain untouched by this situation and as Paul de Man describes it "certain forces that could legitimately be called modern and that were at work in lyric poetry, in the novel, and the theatre have also become operative in the field of literary theory and criticism."¹¹

What Jameson in his remarks on Russian formalism calls a "canonization of a fragment" extends here to hold also for the critical activity "bringing together" different events, various facts of reality so that by resonating or vibrating, by "bouncing off" one another they could unconceal a temporary, fleeting possibility of meaning. Judging from this perspective these essays reach out towards such models as those created by *écriture* of Roland Barthes, Ihab Hassan, Norman O. Brown, Marshall McLuhan, and Jacques Derrida whose efforts could be delineated as *essai concret*. Donald Theall, the inventor of the term, explains it in the following way:

«Essai concrete» is meant to apply to either printed or oral or even mixed media forms as long as they have the same relationship to the combination of theorizing and expression inherent in the essay as well as some conscious relation to the dialectical process of weighing and juxtaposing of opposites [...].¹²

Both features of what Theall calls *essai concrete*, i.e. the combination of theory and expression as well as the insistence on the dialectic character of *écriture*, can be more adequately introduced as the sense of metaphor in the critical practice and the simultaneity and congruity of opposite concepts occurring in the interpretative act. The first is secured by the awareness of the circular power of word which, while naming, transcends the very realm of the literal:

The sower soweth the word. In the beginning was the word, in the beginning was the deed; in the resurrection, in the awakening, these two are one: poetry. [...]

The antinomy between mind and body, word and deed, speech and silence, overcome. Everything is only a metaphor; there is only poetry.¹³

The other accompanies the notion of transparency which will lead, in turn, to Blake's doctrine of "seeing through the eye"; the transparency that puts on a par the sound and the silence, the trace and the (absence of) origin. It is this transparency into which enters the hermeneut in his act of tracing a meaning:

Transparency. To let the light not on but in or through. To look not at the text but through it; to see between the lines; to see language as lace, black on white; or white on black, as in the sky at night, or in the space on which our dreams are traced.¹⁴

The sense of metaphor as a manner of a production of the discourse postulates imagination as a fundamental device of scholarly investigation. It is not incidental that it is the twentieth century revival and reinterpretation of the hermeneutic experience that calls forth *Phantasie* into the horizon of research:

It is imagination that is the decisive function of the scholar. Imagination naturally has hermeneutical function and serves the sense for what is questionable. It serves the ability to expose real, productive questions, something in which, generally speaking, only he who masters all the methods of his science succeeds.¹⁵

This is why the initial interest in the orality of literature is not followed as the study of the repertory of oral styles and techniques, but is reinterpreted decisively in the Heideggerian way as a metaphorical expression of the object's indebtedness to its original sphere, of ontological priority of the spoken word over the written one. The adjective

oral is here, as several studies of Martin Heidegger's work point out¹⁶, a synonym of something that precedes a written trace, of what ontologically conditions the object (a work of art, for example), of what foregrounds it in meaning. Nevertheless it is not writing, the very act of inscribing signs, that forms contrast to speaking. The real opposition seems to derive from a revaluation and redefinition of *Logos* which removes the Socratic and Platonic concept of *Logos* as reason, and reinstates the Heraclitean sense of the term as the voice which speaks in and through the facts of reality. If we endorse William Spano's view that "one of the fundamental defining characteristics of contemporary literature [...] is a similar reaction against *Logos* as the Rational Word, or Final Cause"¹⁷, then it is easy to see that the book has definitely more affinity with Derrida's *écriture* (writing conceived of as the ontological strategy) than McLuhan's theory of mass-media (writing as a mode of communication). The oral signifies a meaning attained not by mastering the words of the text but by participating with the words in the world, by letting the words resound with the voice. As Jerome Rothenberg puts it concisely, the fundamental opposition underlying all other contrasts is the one between the oral and the literal.¹⁸ This is a meaning that comes to light with less control we impose over the text and with recognizing the text as a chaos assuming changing configurations of sense. This is possible only when we see the literary fact as a place where the world becomes open, in other words, when we realize that we have left behind not only the classical dictum "the text means" but also more contemporary "the text is" and inscribed our reading into the formula "the text is with-the-world". The text without losing its individual qualities becomes a dialogue with what made it possible.

Thus, oral signifies no more and no less than "origin" (not in a genetic but ontological sense). We are not in a position to recover this origin (here we become close to Derrida's scepticism), but we can try to **unconceal** the manner in which an object (a text) emerges from the origin. The interplay of the visual and aural language is significant: attempting to focus upon the accoustic orality we have to do it via the luministic terminology of "appearing". Hence, the essay on orality shows necessarily its seamy side: it is bound to be written in the language of the optical metaphor.

The text on orality and origin is, from the very first word, an essay on the essential impossibility of recovering either one or the other.

1. Heidegger's Country Path

Heidegger's philosophy can definitely be described as a rethinking of certain traditions. Much work has been done on Heidegger's re-writing of the history of philosophy with regard to a modified reading of *Logos* as a fundamental philosophical concept. Here, let it suffice to say that keen as he was on allegiance to Husserl, Heidegger imposes severe limitations on reason as a mode of achieving the truth. It is a participation rather than intellectual anticipation that forms the heart of the interpretation of *Logos* in Heidegger.

In his *Introduction to Metaphysics* Heidegger makes it evident that a long tradition of the Western thinking needs very badly a reinterpretation:

We must merely free ourselves from the notion that originally and fundamentally *logos* and *legein* signified thought, understanding and reason. As long as we cling to this opinion and even go as far as to interpret *logos* in the light of logic as it later developed, our attempt to rediscover the beginning of Greek philosophy can lead to nothing but absurdities.¹

Heidegger's rhetoric is markedly abundant in phrases which allude or evoke temporality of his discourse, i.e. *Logos* is read so as to reveal its original and fundamental sense, and the philosopher's intention is described as a rediscovery of the "beginning". Heidegger thinks backward to unconceal the origin of all thought, to find and relate in naming

||

Voice as Understanding

Somewhere in time [...] Augustine is writing his *Confessions*. Unconcerned with us, he finishes writing his book. He doesn't know we are watching him.

— Peter Nilson, *A Labyrinth in Which We Are Lost*

the experience of the foundation, or "ground" In the 1957 text we read:

Being becomes present as *Logos* in the sense of ground, of allowing to let lie before us (*im Sinne des Grundes, das Vorliegenlassen*).²

The "ground" to which Heidegger's thought brings us is, first of all, synonymous with permanence, but also with inevitable belonging there of all objects. Everything that is is gathered in the sphere of ground, and only there can be understood, hence what is historically distant, what constitutes the origin, the beginning, is also manifest in the present, in a lived experience of now. Thus, the ground, *Logos*, as a foundation of thinking is not only universal and temporally detached from us, but it connotes a decisive opening towards what may happen. *Logos* is, then, a collection (*Sammlung*), but also a reading and gathering:

Lego, legein, Latin *legere*, is the same as the German word "lesen" "to gather, collect, read", "Ähren lesen, Holz lesen, die Weinlese, die Auslese" (to glean, to gather wood, the vintage, the cream of the crop); "ein Buch lesen" is only a variant of "lesen" in the strict sense, which is: to put one thing with another, to bring together in short, to gather; but at the same time the one is marked off against the other. That is how the Greek mathematicians used the word. A coin collection is not a mere quantity assembled any which way.³

Logos is an interpretation, i.e. a fundamental hearing of meaning as present in different contexts and situations. Heeding *Logos* is to listen to the words and unconceal the meaning which underlies them. This meaning so differently present in "Ährenlesen, die Weinlese, die Auslese" is to be uncovered since as "Grund" it has to be underneath, it has to, literally, under-lie a word. At the same time this meaning has to be collected because it is precisely this intuition of collectedness of sense that secures the very possibility of understanding. Hence, the meaning does not only underlie a text, but also as a kind of palimpsest it imposes itself upon separate words and texts making them work within a structure of unity. *Logos* "hovers over all", and touches everything and it is precisely the preposition "over" which is significant: meaning not only under-lies but also over-lies words and texts. This is what Heidegger is saying in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*:

[...] such a *xynon* (collected presence) is the *nomos* of the *polis*, the statute that constitutes or puts together, the inner structure of the *polis*, not a universal that hovers over all and touches none, but the original unifying unity of what tends apart.⁴

As we shall see later this political verification of *Logos* makes it close to Derrida's *pharmakon*, a foundation and remedy constituting the Greek *polis*.

Logos is then, inherently an interpretation, an act of unconcealing the ground. This is implied in the commentary and re-reading of a passage from Heraclitus that Heidegger offers in his book:

Heraclitus means to say: Men have hearing, they hear words, but in this hearing, they cannot heed, i.e. follow what is not audible like words, what is not a discourse, a speaking, but indeed the *logos*.⁵

It is not a coincidence that Heidegger, one of the main influences on the postmodern poetics, describes understanding in the metaphor of voice. Miles Groth in his comments upon Heidegger uses the verb "hearken" to render the unique character of understanding:

Hearkening is primordial, antedating visual and other sensory experiences [...] one is always hearkening to what surrounds one, [...] is fundamentally sensitive and attuned to the world which is, in a primary way, heard.⁶

Heidegger carefully notices that in German "belong" (*gehören*) and "hear" (*hören*) are related not only etymologically but, first of all, ontologically: the heart of this relatedness lies in a sense of obedience — I obediently listen to those who/which belong together with me to one existential space. What this voice says interests us less as a human speech (*sprechen*), and more as a voice which reaches us from the outside as the voice of Being (*Sage*) which differs from a human voice although the two are neighbours. According to Werner Marx, the problem of localization of voice (*Sage*) necessitates our inhabiting a language so that we could uncover the "place of Silence" (*Ort der Stille*) hidden underneath words of speech:

Saying (*Sage*) is carefully differentiated from human speaking [...] saying demands, calls, and collects into the word, which also does not belong to the human sphere, *Dasein* which belongs to Saying listens to it and its word and brings what it hears correspondingly into human-sounding word [...].⁷

We see then that the world is treated as a system of utterances, and voice is viewed as a procedure through which a text emerges from its background; voice gives contours to an object, a phenomenon is drawn by voice. **Listening to this voice constitutes the heart of the hermeneutic process**, a process through which meanings are unconcealed, i.e. a process which opens my response to and responsibility for the world.

Understanding is represented as voice but also as a division of voices. It is at this moment in Heidegger's thought that the problematic of *Logos* as interpretation opens out to the question of language, i.e. to the problematic of difference. As Heidegger himself suggests *Logos* is a "unity of what tends apart", and through this implication he introduced a necessary rift between *Logos* as **gathering** and *Logos* as a gathering

of **different** objects, elements differentiated from one another. Voice of Being speaks necessarily through individualized voices. Following Heideggerian discourse Jean-Luc Nancy asserts that

[...] *l'hermeneia* poetique [...] consiste dans l'enocation sonore d'un *logos*. *L'hermeneia* est la voix du divin. Et cette voix est tout d'abord [...] voix partagée, différence de voix singulières. Autrement dit, il n'y a pas **une** voix du divin [...] mais **la voix** pour le divin, c'est le partage et la différence [...]. Cette différence est l'articulation du divin sur et dans l'humain.⁸

Heidegger himself suggested a reading of Logos as resident place for language in a well-known passage which claims that "logos also contains within itself the essential origin of the character of all language, and thus determines the way of utterance as a logical way in the broader sense."⁹

Language, for Heidegger, is more than meets the linguist's eye. It is not founded upon difference as distinction, neither is it a sphere of relational thinking as de Saussure believed. Difference, the division of voices, is important in Heidegger not because it draws our attention to either of the two ends, but because it opens a sphere which mediates between them, the sphere where Being appears, where Being can be seen or, rather, heard.

It is a region of a rift (*Riss*) which, however, paradoxically implies and calls forth what Heidegger names "intimacy":

[...] world and things [...] penetrate each other. Thus the two traverse a middle. In it, they are at one. Thus at one they are intimate. The middle of the two is intimacy.¹⁰

Difference is then an intimate space, a "dimension for world and thing",¹¹ and a spatial metaphor Heidegger uses in this quotation is a preparation for a famous passage from the essay *What Are Poets For?* in which the philosopher defines language as the "precinct (*templum*), that is, the house of Being"¹². Language is a space where Being makes itself manifest not by reference (that is to say not in the way signs refer to objects they denote), but by making Being present in texts. Language not only lives in the space between the first object and the original plenitude of Being, but it is in itself the first and most important difference in which all differences dwell.

According to Heidegger words are not signs of things. It is in words that things come into being as in a passage from Stefan George's poem which he quotes and interprets in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*:

So I renounced and sadly see
Where word breaks off no thing may be.¹³

Interestingly enough Heidegger's concept of language as a house where

Being dwells is parallel to Benjamin's theory of language as a "home":

The conviction that guides me in my literary attempts [...] is that each truth has its home, its ancestral place, in language, that this palace was built with the oldest *logoi*, and that to a truth thus founded the insights of the sciences will remain inferior for as long as they make do here and there in the area of language like nomads [...] in the conviction of the sign character of language which produces the irresponsible arbitrariness of their terminology.¹⁴

For both Heidegger and Benjamin language is a territory of the overcome uncanniness of existence (a "home" or a "house"), a region in which the energy of beginning imperceptibly becomes transmuted in the acquiescence of ending: language is a native realm, motherly place from which we set out and to which we eventually return. Language as "built with oldest *logoi*" (Benjamin) or as the original collectedness of things (Heidegger's definition of *Logos*) necessarily must, in both cases, be a haunted palace, a house where one can listen to voice of Being (*Sage*), or to "ancestral" voices, as Benjamin puts it in his fragment. Finally, purely descriptive and quantitative discourse of sciences differs from literary discourse on the question of sign. The arbitrary, i.e. "irresponsible" terminology of sciences is made possible by the very fact that the sign is not anchored in the originary area, remains "homeless" or, as Benjamin puts it, its existence resembles that of a "nomad". If he calls this character of a sign "irresponsible" it is because a nomadic, homeless sign is locked in a circle of other signs and does not, cannot, respond to anything other than itself. The sign of sciences and scientific discourse remains inferior less because it is not responsible for, and more for its inability to respond to the Other.

Heidegger in his discussion of the status of the art work also emphasizes an inescapable dialogical, or responsive/responsible, character of the sign within the work of art. A distinction which the philosopher traces between a work and an art work is precisely a self-enclosedness of the sign in a work and its openness in an aesthetic object. A profoundly architectural structure of language surfaces in art because it is there where the sign becomes a house inhabited by the Other which has to be detected, hearkened, and brought to light within the physical shape of language as its meaning.

The art work is [...] a thing that is made, but it says something other than the mere thing itself is, *allo agoreuei*. The work makes public something other than itself; it manifests something other; it is an allegory. In the work of art something other is brought together with the thing that is made. To bring together is, in Greek, *sumballein*. The work is a symbol.¹⁵

Language is a shelter, a house of Being because it is a place where a thingly character of an object coexists with its existential element, where a material being of a work is seen as

[...] out-standing standing-within the essential sunderance of the clearing of beings.¹⁶

This ancestral home haunted by voice of Being is, architecturally, related with the Greek temple the description of which will be given later. Here let it suffice to say that like the Greek temple, the house of language is transparent, i.e. like a colonnade of the Greek *templum* it does not separate and seal off, but through spacing, a rhythmical distancing, it brings into the open,

[...] the Open which poetry lets happen [...] in such a way that only now, in the midst of beings, the Open brings beings to shine and ring out.¹⁷

Poets have, for Heidegger, this ability to name which is never an innocent and in-different naming, but in which a poet "names the gods and names all things in that which they are".¹⁸

Such an area is very carefully delineated in Heidegger's writings where it is described as *das Gevierte*, the sphere of the mysterious Fourfold where the sky meets the earth, and mortals dwell with Gods. A temporal dimension of this territory is defined, like the architectural structure of language as a house, as a sudden opening of the now and its melting with a most distant temporal horizon which calls forth most primeval traditions ("ancestral home" of Benjamin). *Das Gevierte* which Heidegger tries to uncover in all works of men (see his interpretation of Van Gogh's painting in the essay *The Origin of the Work of Art*) can be read (or mis-read) through Benjamin's concept of *Jetztzeit* which the VIX thesis on *The Philosophy of History* defines as a mysterious and discontinuous presence of the tradition in the moment of now:

History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homegenous empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now.¹⁹

What in Benjamin is characteristically historicized in Heidegger's philosophy becomes metaphysical, and a sudden explosion of now into meaning is described as

listening to the tradition that does not give itself up to the past but thinks of the present.²⁰

The analysis of a literary text ought to, in the Heideggerian literary theory, bring the text to the Open, i.e. to reveal the way in which the four elements of the Fourfold call each other forth. In other words, a critic's effort will be directed towards seeing a text as silhouetted against the back-Ground which is Being, and since Being resides in the house of language, it is through language that the critic would try to weave his interpretative thread.

Interpretation, through recognizing separateness of the elements of the work, through rethinking their thingly character, tries to reestablish a link with their ontological background. Hence, as Geoffrey Hartman claims, the significance of literature lies outside the edge of paper. The problem of interpretation is a question of both recognizing and overcoming the radical separation introduced by a frame. Interpretation is the sublation (*aufhebung*) of a frame.

What the edge means is impossible to define in terms of inside and outside or balance or imbalance. The equilibrium of a page or book is like the illusory concept of Greek repose; that balance which in Hegel's dialectic is [...] thrown off balance, the limit-boundary is crossed or sublated.²¹

One of the questions that still remain to be answered concerns the position of the author in Heidegger's vision of interpretation. To begin with, Heidegger forcefully insists on the unimportance of the author as individuality in a paradoxical belief that the excellency of the product is measured by the degree of its independence from its producer. In his comment upon Trakl's poem Heidegger ironically gives us the author's full name only to deconstruct it in the next sentence:

The poem was written by Georg Trakl. Who the author is remains unimportant here, as with every other masterful poem. The mastery consists precisely in this, that the poem can deny the author.²²

To deconstruct the author is to explode certain closure that limits a given text and confines it to this or that structure of personality, i.e. it brings the text to the Open, or to be more specific to the truth of the Open:

Truth is the primal conflict in which, always in some particular way, the Open is won within which everything stands and from which everything withholds itself that shows itself and withdraws itself as a being.²³

We can again interpret Heidegger through Benjamin who, as Terry Eagleton claims, like the author of *Being and Time*, believed in the creator as someone who hearkens to the voice of Gods:

Being speaks in *Sache* [...] which in turn speaks through the language of literary texts, which in turn go to compose the tradition that speaks to and through individual subject.²⁴

We see, then, that the author deconstructed by Heidegger becomes a version of open collectedness, a gathering of many voices and traditions that speak to and through him, and who must be totally available to all of them. In one word, the author can be best understood as *Dasein*. This term enables us to use the very word "author" without being lured into interpreting it on a personal ground, as *Dasein* implies

precisely a radical opening which precludes a closure of the personal. *Dasein* is open because it has been made available to its own future, i.e. it is impossible to speak of *Dasein* without realizing that what we speak of is a constant movement between the future and the past.

This temporality of *Dasein*, that is to say of interpretation, since Heidegger claims that

The phenomenology of *Dasein* is a hermeneutic [...] it designates this business of interpreting²⁵,

can be represented in grammatical categories as *Dasein*'s "having been" rather than plainly "was", "is", or "will be". Such a situation is described in *Being and Time* where *Dasein*'s thrownness into the world, its being-in-advance-of-itself is shown as inherently interwoven with its past. Hence *Dasein*, the author as *Dasein*, i.e. interpretation of the text, is a certain explosion of the now which becomes saturated with the future and the past. As the author as *Dasein* cannot be presented in the language of the personal closure, interpretation as the existential operation is always multi-directional and multivocal.

We can see, then, that the author viewed in the categories of *Dasein* is the sphere of the Open, i.e. it belongs to a territory where the future meets the past, a place where personality is deconstructed and instead we obtain a crossroads of numerous, past and future, readings of events. *Dasein* is there (*Da*) because it is never closed within the confines of a strictly limited personal territory, but it mixes with the world, and thus, together with the world, somehow waits for itself outside.

The author is *Dasein* because he melts his own past with the future of the work in an event, a happening, which has been. The author as *Dasein* is indistinguishable from his texts, he does not stand "before them", but is "in them". As Heidegger would put it in his Rilke essay:

Artist is like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge.²⁶

In the discourse of the architectural metaphor so dear to Heidegger, we can say that the author as *Dasein* is a passageway, a transition for language, in the same way as language was a house of Being. It is not the man that speaks. It is language that does all the speaking, and the author is but another item in language's vocabulary.

2. Derrida's Parcours

I write when commanded by the spirits and the moment I have written I see the words fly about the room in all directions. It is then published and the spirits can read [...].

— William Blake to Crabbe Robinson

To speak of Jacques Derrida is to speak, first of all, of a text. Not only because in philological or hermeneutic investigations one should cautiously avoid bringing in author's personality but for a more fundamental reason: for Derrida, there is nothing that evades the name of a text, a text is a synonym of the universe. In a Buddhist story related about Chuang-tzu the master wakes up from a dream in which he was a butterfly to plunge in uncertainty as to whether it was Chuang-tzu that dreamed the butterfly, or perhaps the butterfly that still dreams Chuang-tzu.

Analogically, Derrida is aware of a fundamental ambiguity: we have no available means to ascertain whether we constitute a part of a book, or whether a book is a part of us. Such a dilemma does not appear overtly in his writing, but forms its hidden, subterraneous movement, and that is why an American translator of *De la grammatologie* rightly completes her brief biographical information of Derrida with a characteristic statement which is more true of Derrida than of any other philosopher:

Jacques Derrida is also this collection of texts.²⁷

Man does not exist outside a text, but co-exists with its letter. The terminology of this sentence is overtly Heideggerian, and Derrida does not conceal his indebtedness to the author of *Sein und Zeit*. To remain in the wake of Heidegger's discourse we could say that Derrida frequently **unconceals** Heidegger.

Positions, the work which on the one hand can be recommended as the most clear elucidation of his views, but which, at the same time, characteristically blurs the contours between fiction and reality (the book consists of the imaginary conversations Derrida held with various scholars) opens with the following observation:

Rien de ce que je tente n'aurait été possible sans l'ouverture des questions heideggeriennes [...] sans l'attention à ce que Heidegger appelle la différence ontico-ontologique, la différance entre l'être et l'étant telle qu'elle reste d'une certaine manière impensée par la philosophie.²⁸

It is with the term "différance" that the passage offers us a master key to Derrida's philosophy. The traditions informing Derrida's thought in

this respect are Heideggerian metaphysics and de Saussure's linguistics, nevertheless they are both overcome by the temporal and spatial interpretation of the concept of "différence" in grammatology. As Derrida rightly points out *Différer* signifies a double encircling: first, it denotes an estrangement of a thing from other things, a circle of identity in which it becomes inscribed ("un sens de différer [...] ne pas être identique, être autre, discernable [...]"²⁹); second, it marks a circle which makes our way towards a thing that is ever absent and illusive, in other words, it marks a constant delay and distance separating us from a thing ("The thing itself always escapes"³⁰). From these two statements Derrida can easily derive all the important items of his grammatological dictionary which will also frequently appear in this book: *archi-écriture*, *archi-trace*, *supplément*, *pharmakon*, *hymen*.

We can see that the central place of *différence* in Derrida's philosophy is secured by two movements: one which singles out an object, and the other which is established by the economy of delay or detour, of marching always on the peripheries, on the margins of a thing, marching that was set in motion by the ineluctable sign character of an object (*marge — marque — marche*). *Différence* is not, as in de Saussure, a differentiation of one phenomenon from another, neither is it, as in Heidegger, a rift (*Riss*) between a differentiated object and the domain of the Same, but it becomes a dominating mode of production of reality. It is *différence* that underlies all the observable differences. In other words, it is a coup-de-grace dealt at the belief that the originary sphere is the realm of Sameness. Derrida's *différence* is far more profound than de Saussure's or Heidegger's as its productive character abolishes the myth of the origin as well as the archetype of the Same. For these reasons *différence*, in Derrida's terminology, becomes *différance*. This silent, inaudible (*marque muette*) transition from *e* to *a* signifies 5 things:

1. As we have already said, it underscores a generative function of what in de Saussure and Heidegger was only a regulatory operation: it is through the endless fall down the abyss of *différence* that we can see all minute differences of reality:

Le différences sont produit — différées — par la différence.³¹ L'activité ou la productivité connotées par le *a* de la différence renvoient au mouvement génératif dans le jeu des différences.³²

2. A peculiar mixture of "deferment" and "difference" which occurs in the French word *différer* accounts for the semiotic situation in which all the codes of reality present themselves as a historical structuring of differences. An object viewed from the perspective of *différance* is always a certain temporary arrangement of form, magma approximating

an evanescent shape. A thing in grammatological theory is a "tissue of differences" (*tissu de différences*), becomes unspeakable in the economy of deferment and the movement of absence:

The economic character of *différance* in no way implies that the deferred presence can always be recovered [...] ³³

3. This economy implies a fundamental inability to describe, to dismount an object, to demonstrate all parts of a thing, all elements of a text, since a thing or a text are only a certain structure of temporaneity which forms a changeable configuration of lines or threads of sense. A text is, then, in the theory of *différance* a cluster (*faisceau*) of differences which separate one reading from another:

Je tiens ici au mot de faisceau pour deux raisons: d'une part il ne s'agira pas [...] de décrire une histoire, d'en raconter les étapes, texte par texte, contexte par contexte, montrant chaque fois quelle économie a pu imposer ce dérèglement graphique; mais bien du système général de cette économie. D'autre part le mot faisceau paraît plus propre à marquer que le rassemblement proposé a la structure d'une intrication, d'un tissage, d'un croisement qui laissera repartir les différents fils et les différentes lignes de sens [...] tout somme il sera prêt à en nouer d'autres. ³⁴

4. It follows that if a text is a configuration of senses, also the author, the producer of the text, will be no more than a debris of his own, proper, name usually sanctioning, appropriating a specific personal sense of a text. Like a text, the author is a collection of fragments: the graphic derangement Derrida's speaks of (*dérèglement graphique*) of the text caused by *différance* runs parallel to the derangement of the unity that so far has been guaranteed by the proper name (as Rimbaud claims, a poet is a man characterized by "*dérèglement de tout les senses*" ³⁵). The text is a variety of fragments, the author is a variety of madness.

Un texte n'existe, ne résiste, ne consiste, ne refoule, ne se laisse lire ou écrire que s'il est travaillé par l'illisibilité d'un nom propre. Je n'ai pas [...] dit que le nom propre existe et qu'il devient illisible quand il tombe dans la signature. Le nom propre ne résonne, se perdant aussitôt, qu'à l'instant de son débris, où il se casse, e brouille, s'enraye en touchant au seing. ³⁶

5. Thus, the philosophy of *différance* has to be a philosophy of error and distortion. It starts as a spelling mistake ("*grosse faut d'orthographe* [...] *ce manquement à l'orthodoxie réglant une écriture* [...]") ³⁷ substituting a for e, and leads to the theory of mis-reading according to which "le texte est composé en liane et en lierre", ³⁸ but such a vision of a text sees it first of all as distorted (*texte torsé*).

Derrida introduces the architectural metaphor into his works, but there, according to his rule of the free play of signifiants, architecture

ceases to be simply architecture, and becomes **archi-écriture**. A contamination of architecture and writing (*écriture*) opens, in a next step of the linguistic play, an analogy with the Greek *arche*, the original foundation upon which Being is erected. Thus, the architecture of Being, the ontological edifice of human thought is a form of writing (**archi-ÉCRITURE**) the profound originality of which cannot be questioned (**ARCHI-écriture**). It is here, at this moment, where we begin to notice a radical difference between the **two styles of philosophical, hermeneutic, architecture**: Heideggerian and Derridian.

Before we discuss this difference it has to be noticed that the very problem of style is of a fundamental value. A style is synonymous to our intervention into the world, the intervention which is frequently brutal and deadly; our definition of style emphasizes its **violence committed upon the self-sufficiency and identity of the world which tries constantly to defend itself against our naming**. A style (*stylus*) is not only a pen but also, originally, a spur, a rapier, a fallic object, a cutting and tearing blade:

Le style éperonnant, l'objet long, oblong, arme de parade autant qu'il perfore, la pointe oblongifoliée tenant sa puissance apotropaïque de tissus, toiles, voiles qui se bandent, se ploient ou déploient autout d'elle, c'est aussi, ne pas l'oublier, le parapluie.³⁹

Nevertheless, the very defence of the world against human naming is already its entering into the indissoluble bond with man. Cid Corman's oral poetics sees this ontological aspect underlying the Derridian entanglement of language in paradoxes:

Language [...] is a weapon, instrument, plume and rapier, bomb and caress. It is the soul and spirit that we extol ourselves by. It is the exaltation and exultation man has provided himself out of his physical being. It is a bond.⁴⁰

It follows from Heidegger's doctrine that "withdrawing", which is a withdrawal upward, emphasizes the role of the domain from which objects emerge; thus, Heidegger's building stands firm against the forces of nature which, although deadly and threatening, serve as the ontological background against which an object must be seen. Let us refer to the already mentioned presentation of the Greek temple:

It simply stands there in the midst of a rugged, rocky valley. The edifice surrounds the statue of God and lets it, in its concealment, stand out through the colonnade into the sacred sphere [...]. The presence of God is in itself the unfolding and confining of a sphere sacred. The temple and its sphere do not float away into indefiniteness [...]. Standing there the edifice rests on bedrock. This repose of the building draws out the darkness of the huge, and yet suppressed to nothing character of the rock. [...] The unshakebleness of the edifice opposes the waves of the sea and, because of its own calm, lets them appear in their fury.⁴¹

Derrida precludes the very possibility of such a background; his philosophy leaves no room for, what Heidegger calls, *die Gegnet* which is a place where essents stems from. Hence, while an architect can, in Heidegger's theory, step back, withdraw, to a place from which his building will have ideal proportions and symmetries, a Derridian builder never has anything else at his disposal than mere notation, drawing, WRITING, a draft or a scheme of a structure. Heidegger's temple can be completed and seen against the sky, while Derrida's dome will remain for ever unfinished, and thus will only be a **trace**, a suggestion, of a building.

We should not let go unnoticed the fact that Heidegger in his interpretation of the Greek temple underscores a function of the foundations, the rock upon which the structure is built. Derrida's architecture does not admit of such a solid material, but is founded upon writing (*écriture*). Writing is, for Derrida, a sign of infinity. Thus, *archi-écriture* is a combination of indestructibility with an uninterrupted generating of new objects.

The way in which Derrida speaks of writing is reminiscent of the manner in which mystics speak of God. Commenting upon the structure of his first major book, *De la grammatologie*, Derrida remarks that

[...] on se tromperait en effet à conclure de ce qui s'intitule «La fin du livre et le commencement de l'écriture» à la mort du livre et à la naissance de l'écriture. Une page avant le chapitre qui porte ce titre, une distinction se proposait entre la *clôture* et la *fin*. Ce qui est pris dans la clôture dé-limitée peut continuer indéfiniment. Pourvu qu'on ne se contente pas de lire le titre, celui-ci annonce précisément qu'il n'y a pas de fin du livre et qu'il n'y a pas de commencement de l'écriture. Ce chapitre montre justement que l'écriture ne commence pas. C'est même à partir d'elle, si on peut dire, qu'on met en question la requête d'une archie, d'un commencement absolu, d'une origine. L'écriture ne peut donc pas plus commencer que le livre finir [...].⁴²

We can compare this passage with the following fragment from Angelus Silesius:

Gott it noch nie gewest /und wird niemals sey/ Und bleibt doch nach der Welt/ war auch vor ihr allein.⁴³

Such a comparison is only superficially justified. If, for Scheffler (Angelus Silesius's real name), a paradoxical nature of the Absolute does not invalidate efforts leading to its apprehension, Derrida's writing severs all connections between his thought and traditionally vital philosophical notions of Absolute or Transcendence. If the mystical doctrine locates Absolute outside the domain of sign (in Derridian rhetoric: God lies beyond a trace, outside *archi-écriture*), Derrida does not leave the slightest doubt as to the fact that for him there is no possibility to step outside the system of signs. For a mystic, a theologian or a traditional phi-

philosopher, the world is a scheme of signs, a network of signifiants the significés of which lie outside; a grammatologist erases the transcendental signifié usually associated with Logos, with the original Word which gave birth to all the forms of the universe. What follows this originary utterance is **traces**, signs, pointing at the place where they started their existence which never becomes fully independent.

The subordination of the trace to the full presence summed up in the Logos, the humbling of writing beneath the speech dreaming its plenitude, such are the gestures required by an onto-theology determining the archeological and eschatological meaning of being as presence, as parousia, as life without difference: another name for death, historical metonymy where God's name holds death in check.⁴⁴

A further comment pertinent to the subject of Logos as understood in the onto-theological tradition Derrida tries to overcome is found in Geoffrey Hartman's book:

«At the beginning was the Word» means that there can be no period of time of which we could state that there was time with no language [...]. Our striving for an absolute self or unmediated vision simply brings to light all that mediates the incurably visionary self: if we are, we are in time and in language [...]. The "desire of truth" is indeed the "truth of desire", but the latter is disclosed only as the "untruth of style".⁴⁵

Archeology, which for Derrida epitomizes metaphorically the traditional onto-theological stance in philosophy, reminds us of the Heideggerian style which is par excellence an archeological reconstruction of an ancient temple. What is more, the sanctuary described by Heidegger is also a seat of God and, thus, a central point of the world, the point which determines the order and events:

The temple edifice disposes and at the same time assembles around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and recession acquire their form and course in the destiny of human essence.⁴⁶

The style of Derrida's *archi-écriture* is essentially and necessarily pen-oriented:

La question du style c'est toujours l'examen, le pesant d'un objet pointu. Parfois seulement d'une plume. Mais aussi bien d'un stylet, voire d'un poinçard.⁴⁷

It is important to note that the building erected according to the rules of the Derridian style is a structure of a total character; it cannot be otherwise since writing is the most general formula for all the strategies and operations performed by men because of its inevitable, profound, trace

character. Writing is, for Derrida, not a mode of notation, of communicating the world, but a radical mode of its existence. This is a point which opens *De la grammatologie* where writing seems to approximate Heidegger's "language" although ultimately Derrida is aware of the essential difference between the two terms:

[...] we tend to say "writing" for all that and more: to designate not only the physical gestures of literal pictographic or ideographic inscription, but also the totality of what makes it possible; and also, beyond the signifying face, the signified face itself. And thus we say "writing" for all that gives rise to an inscription in general, whether it is literal or not even if it [...] is alien to the order of voice.⁴⁸

Even in this fragment Derrida's indebtedness to Heidegger is noticeable: "la totalité de ce qui la rend possible" stands close to Heidegger's "die Genet" as described in *Feldweg*. Nevertheless, a distinction between language and writing opens a fissure between the two styles of philosophical architecture. In its nature language is, according to Heidegger, a phonetic matter, is born of breath, not of hand. Heideggerian language described metaphorically as the "Voice of Being" (*Sage*) is a pneumatic essent, and its written variety cannot but be reminiscent of the immaterial original. Pondering a passage from Rousseau:

If the natural law had been written only in the human reason, it would be little capable of directing most of our actions. But it is also engraved in the heart of man in ineffable characters [...]. There it cries to him.⁴⁹

Derrida rightly observes that writing in such an understanding is only a substitute of speech, a graph is a poor relative of a phoneme. Inscriptions engraved in a heart, the invisible writing of the soul, as well as inscriptions upon the walls of Roman temples, or smooth sentences in the diaries of elegant, romantically sentimental ladies are attempts at this radical replacement, essential substitution and representation (Heidegger's *vorstellen*) of what IS, but what remains absent in the inscription. An inscription upon an Alpine rock and a verse written on a sheet of vellum paper do not differ in their essence: both recall the absent original, and both are signs of its momentarily eclipsed presence. In short, voice, *phoné*, is a presence, while writing is its substitute.

In practice it implies a questioning of what may be described as Totality (Derrida uses the term himself), a region in which our understanding of the world reaches its highest point. It is possible to translate Derrida's discourse into Blake's rhetoric, and then state that Totality is this moment when our vision is characterized by clarity allowing us to notice what, so far, has been sealed as "usual" or "every day". Totality is another name for the result of the process of "cleansing the doors of perception" (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*), the moment of "seeing

infinity in an hour" (*Auguries of Innocence*) the area where a transition from experience to innocence takes place.

It is with the word "experience" that our translation falters, as Derrida brackets this notion as inherently connected with the presence of the original: we can experience only what is given to us in its immediacy, i.e. an object which we face directly without a detour of the sign. European metaphysics centered round the concept of the transcendental Presence which leaves its imprints, traces, in the physical reality treated the notion of "experience" as vitally important. Thus, Derrida in his Nietzschean attempt at the revaluation of all metaphysics erases experience, brackets it, and makes it absent. Derrida's *sous rature*, the strategy of erasing concepts which are present only as traces, as marks, as shadows, is an Ockhamian manouever, but where Ockham uses a razor, Derrida contents himself with an eraser:

"Experience" has always designated the relationship with a presence, whether that relationship had the form of consciousness or not [...]. Thus, for example, the experience whose "theory", Hjelmslev says, "must be independent" is not the whole of experience. It always corresponds to a certain type of factual or regional experience (historical, psychological, physiological, sociological, etc.), giving rise to a science that is itself regional [...].⁵⁰

Everything, according to Derrida's deconstruction theory, is a trace, and there can be no original since the very conceptualizing and naming makes it already a trace, a mere imprint. If Derrida uses words reminiscent of the traditional metaphysics (like "Totality", for example) it is only to suggest that there is no "Totality", no ontological background from which objects, words, signs, texts, originally stem. Heidegger emphasized his belief in language as the House of Being because he saw a possibility of profound ontological movement outside this House; this movement was, for him, necessary, as a man was basically an essent "on the way" towards the House:

Thinking itself is a way. We correspond to this way by being on the way.⁵¹

When interpreting a text (a world) man is called by the voice of Being to withdraw towards the original plenitude. For Derrida such a movement is impossible. If, in Heidegger's theory, the word must be anchored in what preceded it (*Sprechen* is made clearly distinct from *Sage*), in Derrida's posthermeneutic theory the word only reverberates and reflects another word. For Heidegger language is the House in which there lives what IS, for Derrida language (that is to say, writing) itself is what IS. Hartman rightly notices rabinnic sources of this attitude.

Derrida lets language be, not by nonchalance but by giving it its "to be", as he deconstructs a text or moves within, rather than simply against, equivocation and the multiple register of words. As in the Hebrew liturgy that quoted God against God to plead a covenant in danger, so here words are quoted against words to save the contract between word and thing [...]. Let no one mistake this nonbook: *Glas* [a title of Derrida's work] is of the House of Galilee.⁵²

It is here and now that we come back to the notion of *sous rature* and to our discussion of the differences between the two philosophers. *Sous rature*, as an interpretative, methodological strategy owes its existence to Heidegger's text *Zur Seinsfrage*. Seemingly, the two passages could have been written by one hand:

- A. A thoughtful glance ahead into this realm of "Being" can write it only as *Being*. The drawing of these crossed lines at first only wards off, especially the habit of conceiving "Being" as something standing by itself [...]. The sign of crossing through can, to be sure [...] not be merely a negative sign of crossing out [...].⁵³
- B. [...] the sign ~~is~~ that ill-named ~~thing~~, the only one, that escapes the instituting question of philosophy: "what is...?"⁵⁴

The graphic similarity is suppressed by interpretative differences. According to Heidegger's "crossing through" (*Durchkreuzung*) is far from identical with "crossing out" (*Durchstreichung*), and therefore there can be no homology between it and Derrida's *sous rature* which is an invalidation, essential bracketing, ontological erasure, annihilation. Just the opposite, *Durchkreuzung* opens the possibility of withdrawing towards the place of a more essential meaning, the place which is the Origin of all meaning. Thus, a text in Heidegger's hermeneutics will always contain a possibility of readings which lie outside its area, are external to writing: in Derrida's theory a book reads only what lies between its lines. For the author of *Sein und Zeit* there exists a territory which is not a text; grammatology looks at such a possibility as at an unaccountable philosophical scandal.

It is logical that Derrida points out certain basic inconsistencies in Heidegger's philosophy. Although the diagnosis of the illness from which suffers metaphysics is in both thinkers similar, it is Heidegger who, according to Derrida, stops half way between a diagnosis and remedy. Questioning the correctness of all the fundamental concepts of Western philosophy (e.g. a reinterpretation of *Logos*) Heidegger still remains captive of the onto-theological tradition from which he originally tried to break away. Heidegger's philosophy is, then, "phonocentric", that is to say, it remains loyal to the line of thinking which sees in voice understood both in the mystical and phonetic sense the element of the Origin, of the initial Presence. In *Positions* Derrida, having stated his indebtedness to Heidegger, goes on to say:

[...] il y a sans doute un certain phonologisme heideggerien, un privilège non critique accordé chez lui, comme dans tout l'occident, à la voix, à une «substance d'expression» déterminée. Ce privilège, dont les conséquences sont considérables et systématiques, se laisse reconnaître par exemple dans la prévalence significative de tant de métaphores «phoniques», dans une méditation sur l'art qui reconduit toujours, à travers des exemples dont le choix est très marqué, à l'art comme «mise en oeuvre de la vérité». Or l'admirable méditation par laquelle Heidegger répète l'origine ou l'essence de la vérité ne met jamais en question le lieu au logos et à la phonè.⁵⁵

Discussing in *De la grammatologie* a silent voice which is for Heidegger the voice of Being and the voice of the Source ("die Gewähr der lautlosen Stimme verborgener Quellen") Derrida writes:

The voice of the sources is not heard. A rupture between the originary meaning of being and the word, between meaning and the voice, between "the voice of Being" and the "*phome*", between the "call of bein", and articulated sound; such a rupture, which at once confirms a fundamental metaphor, and renders it suspect by accentuating its metaphoric discrepancy, translates the ambiguity of the Heideggerian situation with respect to the metaphysics of presence and logocentrism. It is at once contained within it and transgresses it.⁵⁶

Similarly, in *Marges de la philosophie* Derrida refers to Heidegger's stance as to "une autre face de la nostalgie que j'appellerai l'espérance heideggerienne", and describes it as „la quête du mot propre at du nom unique.”⁵⁷

The hope which Derrida uncovers in Heidegger is a hope of Presence, of the meaning of a text which may be inarticulate, but which lets itself be heard in a text, and it is the erasure (*sous rature*) of his hope that constitutes the heart of Derrida's philosophical strategy.⁵⁸ All that the reader has at his disposal is a "trace", a sign, deprived of the original, a signifiant bereft of its signifié. A foot-print on the sand does not lead to the foot that has been its origin but only to another foot-print. In the story of Robinson Crusoe written by Derrida the industrious Englishman will never find his black handy man.

Reality is a text which cannot leave, and thus it is wandering from one trace to another, a mere journey among signifiants without once encountering a signifié. **A meaning of a text, according to Derrida, lies in a difference between two traces, in a void between two signs.**

The trace is not only the disappearance of origin — within the discourse that we sustain and according to the path that we follow it means that the origin did not even disappear, that it was never constituted except reciprocally by a nonorigin, the trace, which thus becomes the origin of the origin.⁵⁹

A "path" is a metaphor which, as the alternative for the worn out philosophical terminology, is used both by Heidegger (*Feldweg, Holzwege*)

and Derrida (*parcours*). It is significant that a "path" is not a crowded street or even a tarmac road, but both "Feldweg" and "parcours" are, what Wordsworth in his *Lucy Poems* describes as a track far from the "trodden ways". Heidegger's path upon which "dwell" (to use a Wordsworthian phrase again) the three participants of the debate related in *Gelassenheit* has a well-marked aim which, although difficult to verbalize, is a definitive conclusion of the conversation:

Αγχιβασιμ: "moving-into-nearness". The word could rather, so it seems to me now, be the name for our walk today along this country path.⁶⁰

This convergence of the end of the discourse with the end of the path is not incidental. It emphasizes the intentional character of man as an essent "on the way". Karl Löwith, in his book on Heidegger, gives a succinct and accurate description of Heidegger's paths:

They are said to be overgrown because they are very rarely travelled upon, and also that they end in unmarked wilderness. A man can be easily lost on them. In fact, they themselves get lost in the immutably same forest of Being.⁶¹

Derrida's *parcours* is deprived of such an aim; it is merely a transition from one sign to another for two reasons — there is nothing that precedes language (which could be a beginning of the journey), and also there is nothing that exceeds language (which could be a Heideggerian approximation of the Origin, the end of the path). Derrida's path is forever locked in a circle of written signs in the same way as a *parcours* is a place where horses perform their ritualistic warm-up round before a race (although one may logically conclude that Derrida excludes a race which assumes a finish line, a goal, a final purpose).

There is no knowledge except in the form of a text — of *écriture* — and that is devious and dissolving, very unabsolute, as it leads to other texts and further writing.⁶²

Even *archi-écriture*, the term which seems to be the ultimate concept of Derrida's thought, is only another name for a trace:

[...] arche-writing would be at work not only in the form and substance of graphic expression but also in those of non-graphic expressions. It would constitute not only the pattern uniting form to all substance, graphic or otherwise, but the movement of the sign-function linking a content to an expression, whether it be graphic or not.⁶³

Löwith in his description of Heidegger's path had recourse to the metaphor of a forest. A brief digression will enable us to link this metaphor with the problematic of the proper name (*in Marges de la philosophie*

Derrida inscribed Heidegger's hope into the circle of „la quête du mot propre et du nom unique”).

In chapter III of *Through the Looking-glass* Alice enters a forest in which animals are not afraid of men. In a leasurly walk through the wood the girl is accompanied by a fawn which suddenly runs away once the awkward pair has left the forest. The explanation provided by Lewis Carroll is close to the Heideggerian concept of Being as the inarticulate call: **the forest is a territory without difference**, a realm where names do not hold, a structure without capitalization. It is vitally important to note that this sphere is not without language (Alice does talk to the fawn), but it is very markedly a domain without a proper name (the fawn asked about his name answers promptly “I can't remember here”). Thus, the forest is a territory where, through a withdrawal of the name, the Cartesian dualism of the hard, mechanical substance of being and its delicate, mental form is overcome. Such a forest is not only Heidegger's forest of Being, but — more generally — it is the forest of phenomenological thinking which:

[...] rejects both objective (mechanical) body and transparent intelligence (mind) as an immediate interpretation of experience. What is accepted, however, is a subject equipped with a body whose each activity is a fundamental transition from formlessness to a form, whose gesture precede all the later clarity of intellectual explanations.⁶⁴

We have pointed out an extraordinary intellectual volume of the concept of *écriture* (writing as a style of ontology), now we shall try to specify a more spacious, architectural analogy of the world as writing. In the final section of his first major work, a translation of Husserl's *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie*, Derrida concludes:

Contrairement à ce que la phénoménologie — qui est toujours phénoménologie de la perception — a tenté de nous faire croire [...] la chose même se dérobe toujours. Contrairement à l'assurance que nous en donne Husserl un peu plus loin, “le regard” ne peut pas “demeurer”.⁶⁵

An object (a sign, a text) disappears (*se derobe*), but the next verb (*demeurer*) specifies a quality of this disappearing: it is not an external, material shape that disappears to uncover the invisible essence of an object, but it is a disappearing which uncovers another layer of external ornament, another *robe*, i.e. another signifiant.

The world of Derrida is a world without a contour, without a real face and without a sanctioning outside. A text of the world, according to grammatology, has all the characteristic features of the labyrinth.

The ontological architecture of Heidegger's and Ponty's understanding of the text defends itself against the labyrinthine danger by the

idea of *Zusammengehören*, of my fundamental unity with the world. While the most essential feature of the labyrinth is its closeness, opening is a crucial concept for both Heidegger and Ponty. In a temple there resides something that does not belong to it (Heidegger), in an act of vision there hides something that is invisible (Ponty), but in the labyrinth there is no outside. If "sense" is a width of the fissure through which I can see the other side of the world in which I am locked, then Heidegger's temple and a new rhetorical architecture of Merleau-Ponty are fully phenomenological constructions: I perceive a presence which is different from myself, but with which I stand in the essential unity of co-belonging, of being-with. This is how Derrida understands phenomenology:

[...] nous réservons de préférence le mot de *Bedeutung* pour l'ancienne notion [of meaning — TS], en particulier dans la tournure complexe de *Bedeutung logique* ou "expressive". Quant au mot "sens" nous continuons à l'employer dans son extension la plus large [...] le "sens", est une idéalité, intelligible ou spirituelle, qui peut éventuellement s'unir à la face sensible d'un signifiant, mais qui en soi n'en a nul besoin. Sa présence, son sens ou son essence de sens est pensable hors de cet entrelacement des lors que la phénoménologie, comme le semioticien, prétend se référer à une unité pure, à une face rigoureusement identifiable du sens ou du signifié.⁶⁶

A phenomenological sense is defined by a possibility of opening, and describes a referential relationship between a signifiant and signifié. Such an interpretation locates a phenomenological sense as a beginning, origin and end of human communication: a beginning — because it determines a meaning of a sign, its legibility, an end — as there can be no fuller understanding than when I finally achieve a signifié of a sign. Thus, when saying "I understand" (which is, as every day life speech wisely teaches us, but an extension and synonym of a perceptual act, "I see" means "I understand") I provide my existence with an external, ultimate perspective, as there can be no "understanding", no "seeing" without this central integration of myself and the world. Thus, a phenomenological sense differs from grammatological:

[...] le sens phénoménologique et en dernier recours tout ce qui se donne originellement à la conscience dans l'intuition perceptive — ne serait donc pas d'entrée de jeu en position de signifiant, inscrit dans le tissu relationnel et différentiel qui en ferait déjà un renvoi, une trace, un gramme, un espace-ment.⁶⁷

Meaning, according to grammatology, is a **pure play of signifiers** marked by the absence of the transcendental signified and lack of the division into the outside and inside which, however, throws its shadow unto a question of meaning: even this major erasure is only a trace, i.e. a signifier (one of the chapters of *De la grammatologie* augments this

situation by a graphic notation "Inside ~~vs~~ Outside"). A grammatological sense, grammatological interpretation is, then, the absence of a unifying center, and can be characterized as a **play within language**. In *De la grammatologie* we read:

From the moment that there is meaning there are nothing but signs. We think *only in signs*. Which amounts to ruining the notion of the sign at the very moment when, as in Nietzsche, its exigency is recognized in the absoluteness of its right. One could call *play* the absence of the transcendental signified as limitlessness of play, (that is to say as the destruction of onto-theology and metaphysics of presence. It is not surprising that the shock, shaping and undermining metaphysics since its origin, lets itself be named as such in the period when, refusing to bind linguistics to semantics [...] expelling the problem of meaning outside of their researches, certain American linguists constantly refer to the model of a game [...]. This *play*, thought as absence of the transcendental signified, is not a play *in the world*, as it has always been defined [...]. To think play radically the ontological and transcendental problematics must first be seriously exhausted [...].⁶⁸

A play, a game is what follows onto-theology. While onto-theology was a science of Being founded upon a sharp Cartesian distinction between a subject and object, matter and mind, a science which places itself outside a studied object, a game erases the gap between Being and its description. The essence of a game hides in its total exclusion of the outside which, traditionally, is a domain of meaning, of a signifié.

A game is of interest to Derrida to the extent to which it is exclusively a movement of signifiants. A game does not establish the absolute center which would regulate a hierarchy of elements participating in a game. Signifiants are, within the field of a game, interchangeable depending on a situation and moment of play a pawn can become a queen, and in each role it will participate in a totally different reality. The analysis of a game is for Derrida a rephrasing of his remarks upon language. In a commentary on the relationship between the ideographic notation of the Chinese and the European phonetic script Derrida gives us one of the versions of his theoretical manifesto:

A signifier is from the very beginning the possibility of its own repetition, of its own image or resemblance [...]. From the moment that the sign appears, that is to say from the very beginning, there is no chance of encountering anywhere the purity of "reality", "unicity", "singularity".⁶⁹

The game is necessary to amplify the notion of writing (*écriture*) and, in fact, is nothing else but another name for writing. In both cases we cannot refer to an external sanction for a justification of our operational, or interpretative gestures and, in writing as in the game, we dwell in the distance which necessarily separates a signifiant from an ever absent signifié. In other words, writing (game) is a play of distan-

ces bereft of a central point which my vision could be subjected to and organized into a centralized, perspectival perception. Perspective implies immobility: I have to remain motionless to perceive objects in my field of vision. Dürer understood it very well constructing his tool for the ideal perspectival perception, a vehicle for preventing the head of a viewer from moving.

The game is a negation of such a situation; in the game everything is movable, and it is precisely this final, ultimate character which distinguishes Derrida from Ponty. Merleau-Ponty would willingly approve of the principle of the movement of signifiers, although for him it would never remain limited to this side of semiotic referentiality. In *Le Visible et l'invisible* Ponty attributed three functions to touch: 1) touching, I notice a qualitative aspect of an object (for instance, its hardness), 2) I realize that the object is determined as a collection, a gathering of such qualities, 3) but also I become aware of the very act of touching, I — figuratively — touch the touching. In this triple series there lies a chance for "grasping the object" (*un toucher des choses*):

Déjà dans le "toucher", nous venons de trouver trois expériences distinctes qui se sous-tendent, trois dimensions qui se recoupent, mais sont distinctes: un toucher du lisse et du rugueux, un toucher des choses, — un sentiment passif du corps et de son espace —, et enfin un véritable toucher du toucher.⁷⁰

Although in Ponty's analysis there is a place for what Derrida calls "distance" (if I touch an object I have to be separated from it, and since I am aware of my touching, in the final analysis I stand in a distance to myself) the French phenomenologist accepts such a situation as a suggestion of meaning, a signifié buried underneath a distance. Ponty speaks, in the way Derrida could have spoken, of a "dark dance of the body organs" (*ténèbres bourrées d'organes*), but behind the gestures of this dance there hides a meaning, a signifié, while for Derrida such a dance is a mere movement of signifiants.

For a grammatological construction of the world a signifié, a meaning, hidden under signifiants is another illusion, a stubbornly returning apparition of metaphysics. In his discussion of Rousseau's text on the origin of languages Derrida admits that language becomes possible when distance comes to the fore as an existential category. Rousseau, like Ponty nearly two hundred years later, distinguishes between seeing and hearing, but, unlike Ponty, he does not put them in the relationship of reversibility (*réversibilité*), i.e. to touch an object is inherently and profoundly different from seeing it. At the beginning of his important essay Rousseau divides perception into two elements: active (touching connected with movement), and passive (speaking and listening). While the first implies nearness and immediacy, the other is a product of a se-

paration of individuals (*des hommes dispersés*). Derrida's comments contain an important generalization which holds that:

Language could have emerged only out of dispersion.⁷¹

Hence, a social evolution of a human group finds its philosophical equivalent in a system of graphic representation defined by linearity, a spatial arrangement of parts of a text separated by an empty place. This emptiness is not in-different because it is precisely through gaps, empty places that a text becomes legible, and opens a possibility of polysemy, i.e. of a reproduction:

[...] it is always possible for a text to become new, since the blanks open up its structure to an indefinitely disseminated transformation.⁷²

Spaces, necessary in writing, are a re-working of the radical distance which in Derrida's philosophy is an indispensable part of the human condition. A man and the world, a reader and a text are involved in a complicated game of **mediation**. Even touch, contradicting Ponty and Rousseau, does not step out its realm.

[...] a first movement of sign without speech, when passion, beyond need but short of articulation and difference, expresses itself in an unheard of way⁷³

is in *De la grammatologie* called "an immediate sign, but it would be a grave mistake to infer that this "moment", this area of silence, finally signifies a sphere of the Origin where distance is overcome. For Derrida, and here his ways part with those of Ponty and Heidegger, such a silence is not a shadow of language suggesting the Ineffable Presence, Logos, "transcendental signifié". Ponty grasps this view in a coherent formula:

Tout rapport à l'Être est simultanément prendre et être pris. La prise est prise, elle est *inscrite* et *inscrite* au même être qu'elle prend.⁷⁴

Derrida's "silence" and "immediate sign" are rooted in the distance which cannot be annihilated as long as human cognition has to remain within the field of signs; even touching implies a "minute difference" between the touching and the touched, and, hence inscribes man's communication in "visibility, spacing, death", and becomes "the origin of the sign and the breaking of immediacy".⁷⁵ From the very language and rhetoric of a "minute difference" (*Une infime différence*), a "small difference" (*cette petite différence*), a "breaking of immediacy" (*la rupture de l'immediaté*) one can see that what Heidegger builds with such a care, his concept of "nearness" (*Nähe*) where man merges with Being, Derrida destroys, or rather **deconstructs**, in his effort to emphasize **distance** as a basic category of existence.

It is here where a Nietzschean character of *De la grammatologie* surfaces: first, the new discipline is to reevaluate Western metaphysical tradition; second, it makes an attempt at establishing a new human universe and, as such, is an expedition into another galaxy of thinking (it would be tempting to look at Derrida as an instigator of a new type of discourse in which philosophy is treated like a science-fiction, or a metaphor). The first point may be supported by many fragments which show a marked Nietzschean background, e.g.:

To make enigmatic what one thinks one understands by the words "proximity", "immediacy", "presence" (the proximate [*proche*] the own [*propre*], and the pre- of presence), is final intention in this book.⁷⁶

The other claim justifies itself in a laconic presentation of the aims of grammatology as baring of the real "written", "delayed", nature of speech, as examining "this heliocentric concept of speech"⁷⁷ (*ce concept heliocentrique de la parole*).

What is still subtly present in the sphere of touch makes its presence more felt in the spoken language. In his belief that even speech is already impure, coloured by writing, space, delay, death, i.e. distance, Derrida consciously puts himself in a position contrary to the age-long tradition of word and Logos, of the original priority of the spoken over the written. Also de Saussure sees speech as the main area of linguistic investigations:

The linguistic object is not defined by the combination of the written word and the spoken word: the spoken form alone constitutes the object.⁷⁸

For Derrida such a stance entails a great error, as already in speech lurks writing:

The written sign is absent from the body but this absence is already announced within the invisible and ethereal element of the spoken word, powerless to imitate the contact and the movement of the bodies [...] a speech already carries in itself death and absence.⁷⁹

Substitution becomes a crucial linguistic and ontological experience: since everything is a sign, and a sign is confined only to its signifiant (a notion of the game), everything man does, or says is an element in the play of signifiants in which one signifiant replaces, substitutes another. Thus, obviously, substitution and supplementarity reach beyond language, and, as Derrida points out in his discussion of Levi-Strauss, precede even a distinction between "nature" and "culture":

Everything in language is substitute, and this concept of substitute precedes the opposition of nature and culture: the supplement can equally well be natural (gesture) as artificial (speech).⁸⁰

The essence of writing consists in the fact that it opens unlimited series of substitutions, and closes all the possibilities of breaking the circle of replacement. The Derridian concept of *écriture* in its stress upon the absence of the signifié opposes the tradition of all the metaphysics which saw in man a place where the world comes to know itself. We recognize that this description also holds for phenomenology in its insistence upon the co-belonging, of **being-with** of man and world, the area which referring to the realm beyond the sign and substitution, locates itself also beyond death, i.e. beyond writing.

Derrida considers such a possibility a scandal. In his discussion of Heidegger's concept of the sign Derrida — through a long but typical historical detour leading him back to d'Alembert — would side with Peirce and say that:

[...] Peirce considers the indefiniteness of reference as the criterion that allows us to recognize that we are indeed dealing with a system of signs. What broaches the movement of signification is what makes its interruption impossible. The thing itself is a sign (*la chose meme est un signe*).⁸¹

The theory of unlimited substitution and the absence of the thing itself sends us back to the **labyrinth** as to the most typical structure in the Derridian philosophical architecture. In *Positions* Derrida puts together such notions as "reflection" and "trace", *renvoi* and *trace*, but although in the grammatological reading of reality the world is a structure of words sending us to other words, signifiants directing us to other signifiants, nevertheless **the world as a lexicon** (because deconstruction may be described by such a phrase) is not a purely linguistic *oeuvre*. Derrida locks himself in a paradox of speaking of the world which is determined by what he says, but which had inevitably to exist before the first word was uttered. The Word was preceded by the distance. A new Genesis, written in the rabbinical tradition to which Derrida is obviously indebted, claims that at the beginning there was Distance, a great dispersion, a general Diaspora of man and world. Hence, the lexicon, dictionary, Derrida is writing does not respect boundaries of national languages, but becomes a universal compendium, a great book of words, Mallarmeian in range and scope. To work out a story of each entry Derrida consults numerous sources like *Dictionnaire de l'Academie Francaise* (1694), the encyclopaework of Atanasius Kircher *Polygrafia nova et universalis et combinatoria arte detecta* (1663), Hegel's *Encyclopedia*, or Rousseau's *Dictionary of Music* (1768) in order to form an endless story of words, unrestricted series of signifiers with no ending possible.

But, as Hartman maintains, Derrida differs from Heidegger precisely in the grammatological reading of the world in which a thing IS and IS NOT there ("da"). In a brilliant elucidation of Nietzsche's style Derrida purposefully places it between a "pen" (*une plume, stylus*) and a "stiletto"

(*un stylet*). A style as a protruded curting edge of language, as a "pointed object" (*un objet pointu*) is, at the same time, a means of attack as well as defence, a mode of moving forward, approximation and a dangerous warning about the necessity of distance:

In the question of style there is always the weight or examen of some pointed object. At times this object might be only a quill or a stylus. But it could just as easily be a stilleto, or even a rapier. Such objects might be used in a vicious attack [...] but they might also be used as a protection against the threat of such an attack, in order to keep it at a distance, to repel it — as one bends or recoils before its force, in flight, behind veils sails.⁸²

In both cases we deal with a trace, although first it is a result of an immediate contact of two objects (of a pen and a piece of paper), and second, a trace is what remains after an object has fled our attack. Derrida's philosophy of language does not leave us any choice: **I have to use a language in order to mark my presence, but doing it I become even more submerged in absence, in a trace.**

Derrida's labyrinth does not end here (it can never end, as each word/sign/text open their own labyrinths according to the rules of the substitution game). A style as a sharp weapon is a "spur" (*eperon*), and *eperon* through a Middle German "*sporo*" and Gaelic "*spor*" leads to an English "spur" which denotes a necessary part of riding equipment but also, in Mallarme's etymology, it is related to a verb "to spurn", to "reject with contempt".

On the one hand, a style is a way of attacking and promotes a movement forward, on the other — its essential prerogative is a withdrawal and discouragement of any approximation. Hence, the object of our style, of our pen, of our sword, evades us, leaves us only its imprints which fact finds its reflection in a German noun *Spur* denoting a "trace" or "hint".⁸³

Surrendering to a natural temptation to speak of Derrida in his own rhetoric one could claim that he is the most Joycean of all philosophers. Such a qualification is justified not only in Derrida's passion for linguistic games and etymology (these interests are also of great importance for students of Heidegger, and Hartman suggests a man has to pun as he has to breathe), but first of all in a radical absence of an object. Not only Derrida's own writing is entangled in this absence but the very ontological structure of the world reveals a trace, non-presence, and death as a natural element of man. ("The gesture [...] guards us against an already alienating speech, a speech already carrying in itself death and absence."⁸⁴) Man's being in the cricle of signs (and no other mode of being is possible) is inherently synonymous with being within a circle of death and its rituals are expressive of our homage paid to the dead, to the non-present, to the already absent:

And style thereby protects the presence, the content, the thing itself, meaning, truth — on the condition that it should not *already* (déjà) be that gaping chasm which has been deflowered in the unveiling of the difference. *Already* (déjà), such is the name for what has been effaced [...]⁸⁵

The two rituals (following a thing that is incessantly in front of me, remaining for ever in a shadow of its presence, and our service offered to the dead) find a succinct expression in an English word "wake" which James Joyce uses in the title of his most controversial book. In *De la grammatologie* Derrida frequently replaces the word "trace" with its synonym *sillage* which denotes also a trace left by a ship on a water, in the same way an English "wake" combines a mark of the non-present ship with a ritualistic homage to the dead. No wonder then that Hartman can coin a well-formed phrase and describe Derrida's speaking not as "voicing" but as "joycing", to suggest a voice does not have any privileged position with regard to a supposed originary presence, but appears already mediated by writing. A voice is, from the very beginning, locked in the labyrinth of writing from which there can be no exit.

The rhetoric in which this fragment of our text is foregrounded (etymology, punning, Joyce, a *wake* as an all-inclusive trace) is also the native language of Marshall McLuhan's discourse. In one of his later, characteristically collaborative, works (one could say that McLuhan is even to a more conspicuous degree, to use Mrs. Spivak's expression, "a collection of texts" than Derrida) McLuhan approaches language as a "pointed word" (cf. Derrida's *object pointu*), a word which is inscribed in the characteristic chain of phonocentrism and theology:

"Pun" is from Latin *punctum*, a point. The point of a pun is that it has no point. Or, one could say that its point is every — where and its boundaries are nowhere. Such is the definition of acoustic space. Such also is the definition that some ancient societies gave to God [...].

The divine Logos of the Greeks was a simple resonating pun employing that any word contains all possible words. Such again, is the assumption of the myth of *Finnegan's Wake* by James Joyce, a book that consists of one sentence and whose title is a pun that contains all the meanings of the book.⁸⁶

While the initial assumption is markedly Derridian, conclusions lead McLuhan towards a reinstating of the myth of the oral, and therefore his theoretical attempts are directed towards "the visual [which would] retrieve audible-textile", while Derrida concentrates precisely upon the unretrievability of the oral in the written.

A labyrinth as a type of a three-dimensional structure refers to the architectural metaphor which both Heidegger and Derrida use in their philosophy. For the German thinker the Greek temple is a model structure of a thing's being in the world and, characteristically, language is for him the House of Being (*das Haus des Seins*). Derrida also speaks of lan-

guage as of an architectural structure, but a function of the metaphor is different. In a text under a bilingual title *Scribble (pouvoir/écrire)* written as a preface (it is not incidental that many of Derrida's works are prefaces or introductions to works of other writers; since we are caught in the play of signifiers which precludes any final, closed version of a thing, also a text does not exist in itself, but is merely a **preface** and a pretext/ /pre-text for other writings) to a reedition of a French translation of the classic treatise of William Warburton *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated* in which the learned bishop attempts to construct a theory of the hieroglyph as an ideal model of all writing, Derrida frequently uses the term "treasure house of all knowledge"⁸⁷ which is to replace the term "language". If Heidegger's writing, however, could unconceal the truth present in the voice of Being, Derrida consistently emphasizes a graphic character of language. A hieroglyphic sign which speaks its own history (Heidegger's voice as an utterance of the pure Being is necessarily disinherited of all history) is not only a container of knowledge, but, first of all, is a **mode of its structuring**; it is not a description or rotation of knowledge, but in itself it IS knowledge.

Already in the hieroglyphic form of script as well as in a pictogram before and ideogram after it, we are locked in the circle of writing marked by the absence of a central point which could direct a distribution of signifiers, and a sphere where signs would become unnecessary, a sphere of Presence, of the transcendental Signified of Voice. *Écriture* as a labyrinthine structure of the world is, then, like a model of a journey that souls of the deceased have to undertake to the kingdom of Death through a maze of ordeals. Is not writing treated in *De la grammatologie* as a figure of death, of the final absence, a new dans macabre of letters on a page?

Objects exist in relation with man as writing, and thus the world becomes a TEXT, or an unending PRE-TEXT/PRETEXT from which we will never be able to emerge unto the light of the pure, finished, closed, fully interpreted and understood text. Derrida's text is also the impossibility of a text. It is here, in this dramatic closure, where the architectural style of Derrida's philosophy finds its analogy in the preromantic drawings of Piranesi.

Published in Venice in 1744 (then re-edited in 1760) *Carceri d'Invenzione* are, on the one hand, a variation on a fragment of an opera stage-design by Daniel Marot, but — on the other hand — they also shape reality through a striking similarity that may be detected between the Newgate prison designed for London by Dance and the visionary drawings of Piranesi (this point where the "light" of reality blends with the "darkness" of fiction should be carefully noted by Derrida's readers, as writings of the French philosopher constantly disregard distinctions between

genres, between theory and practice). The English literature absorbed enthusiastically Piranesi's iconography, and his drawings became the best epitome of the Romantic vision of being. De Quincey in his *Confessions of English Opium Eater* recalls the way in which Coleridge described to him Piranesi's architectural phantasies:

They represented vast gothic halls; on the floors on which stood all sorts of engines and machinery, wheels, cables, pulleys, levers, catapults etc, etc., expressive of enormous power put forth, and resistance overcome. Creeping along the sides of the walls, you perceived a staircase; and upon it, groping his way upwards, was Piranesi himself; follow the stairs a little further, and you perceive it come to a sudden stop and abrupt termination, without any balustrade, and allowing no steps onwards to him who had reached the extremity except into the depth below. Whatever is to become of poor Piranesi, you suppose, at least, that his labours must in some way terminate here. But raise your eyes; and behold a second flight of stairs still higher; on which again Piranesi is perceived, by this time standing on the very brink of the abyss. Again elevate your eye, and still a more aerial flight of stairs is beheld; and again is poor Piranesi busy on his aspiring labours; and so on until the unfinished stairs and Piranesi are both lost in the upper gloom of the hall.⁸⁸

This verbal rendering of one of the engravings from *Carceri d' Invenzione* describes the man in the post Nietzschean world in which the Apollonian is twisted together with the Dionysian ("Apollo speaks in Dionysos' voice, and Dionysos speaks like Apollo", announces Nietzsche in *The Birth of the Greek Tragedy*). Hence, the relevance of Hartman's remark on grammatology as different from phenomenology in that, as evidenced by *Glas*, it is a labyrinth which implies that it cannot be the House of Being, but merely a house of words, not a divine temple, but a profane construction. The labyrinth is a structure in which the presence of Voice cannot be made manifest; the labyrinth is a three-dimensional failure of voice as presence. In the same way as a seventeenth century engraving places within one sphere the tragedies of Minotaur and Icarus, Derrida links phonetically identical "la voice d'Icar" and "la voix d'Icar" in one semantic-philosophical motif (a philosophem) of the "fall of Voice" as presence, transcendence (see Derrida's book *La voix et le phénomène*).

It is important to be aware of a specific sense of the word "labyrinth" in Derrida's theory where it has nothing to do with a Jungian archetypal figure which is "at the same time a cosmos, a world, a life of an individual, a temple, a city, a womb [...] of the Mother Earth".⁸⁹ For Derrida, according to Nietzsche's claim that truth is available only on the surface, the labyrinth is a one more opening in a never ending discourse, one more signifiant, as all others, bereft of its signifié. The labyrinth is only a more spectacular metaphor for all texts that lurk in every sign in keeping with the rules of the substitution game, is as much a "treasure house of all knowledge" as all other signs.

Hence, as we can see, the differences between Heidegger and Derrida do not exhaust themselves in a diversity of the style, but also include two different concepts of the road. In Derrida, the road is not linear, it does not stretch to be completed, but it is **cyclic** and **self-reproductive**. The grammatological path does not run linearly but multiplies and reproduces its own folds and bends. In its opposition against linearity Derrida locates himself in the **wake** of Marshall McLuhan, and could prophecy together with the media-philosopher "the end of the book era". The first part of the title of the first chapter in *De la grammatologie* could be easily accommodated in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*: "The end of the book [...]"; a comfortable analogy breaks, however, when it comes to consequences of such a radical statement. McLuhan identifies the end of book with the end of print, that is to say with the decay of writing; Derrida sees in writing the beginning of a new culture phase and in this spirit will finish the title "[...] and the beginning of writing". Obviously, when McLuhan thinks mainly of the limitations and modifications of the technology of communication and their impact upon man's consciousness, Derrida focuses on writing as on a mode of ontology. In grammatology the world and man stand united in and by the cripplehood of necessary mediation. Where Heidegger speaks of "nearness" (*Nähe*), Derrida emphasizes distance and scattering.

Here we touch upon another crucial term in Derrida's glossary; if Heidegger underscores gathering (**Sammlung**) of all objects in to the one whole of Logos, Derrida will advertize the notion of **dissemination**, that is to say of *la différance séminale* which lies at the foundation of Derrida's theory of interpretation as a strategy of indecision and endless polysemy. In *De la grammatologie* we read:

The end of linear writing is indeed the end of the book, even if, even today, it is within the form of a book that new writings — literary or theoretical — allow themselves to be, for better or for worse, encased. It is less a question of confiding new writings to the envelope of a book than of finally reading what wrote itself between the lines in the volumes (ce qui [...] s'écrivait déjà entre les lignes).⁹⁰

Dissemination signifies not only dispersion but also spreading, the very act of sowing which, when applied to Derrida's interpretative strategy, denotes incessant multiplication, sowing and growing of words in the process of the gigantic polysemy the simplest form of which is a pun. A text never comes back to the Father; a father and a mother of such a text is a word, a word which sows other words. This is what Derrida stresses in his comment upon Mallarmé's phrase *le heurt succesif* ("the successive bumping"):

The disseminating power of the "s" is entirely appropriate here; "successive" is used in the literal sense of dissemination having successors: to sow (semer) seeds [...].⁹¹

As we have seen from the two quoted passages interpretative procedures in deconstruction are founded upon the basic conviction of the impossibility of closing and completing the interpretation. There is no way out from the house of words, as there is no way out from Piranesi's imaginary prison (significantly enough, Frederick Jameson's important book on revaluation of structuralism is called *The Prison House of Language*).

In the spatialized model of this criticism the architecture of the text as graphic representation ("a transparent column" Derrida's borrowing from Mallarmé) is protracted into the architecture of the ego ("my heart's core — which is precisely a city, and a labyrinthian one"⁹²) and of dissemination of meaning in the process of interpretation:

The column is nothing, has no meaning in itself. A hollow phallus, cut off from itself, decapitated, it guarantees the innumerable passage of dissemination and the playful displacement of the margins. It is never itself, only a writing that endlessly substitutes it for itself, doubling it as its very first surrection [...].⁹³

The same rhetoric recurs not only in Derrida's writing, but also in Hartman's and in the interpretative practice of J. Hillis Miller and Joseph Ridell.

Ridell discussing critical and philosophical views of Harold Bloom, an eminent representative of the Yale school⁹⁴, describes Bloom's discourse as a combination of the labyrinth and library:

[Bloom's work is] a fiction [...] or a rhetorical poem that rewrites Borges's legendary "Library of Babel" in Stevensonian metaphors [...]. The Library, a totality that contains all books and therefore the language which offers all the possible combinations out of which any future book will be made produces a delirium and a vertigo in those who seek the master text, the key [...] the vastness of the labyrinth [...] produces a rash of contradictory theories, each of them regional and exclusionary.⁹⁵

Ridell justly stresses the fact that in a world which is a text each word contains not only its own history but a history of all literature: Bloom rewrites Borges in Stevens's language, Derrida exposes Hegel to the corrosive activity of *écriture* reading *The Phenomenology of Mind* through Freud, Joyce, and Genet. All interpretation is then a final and most consistent manifestation of writing, as it leaves us no choice but to write anew (rewrite) after somebody has already written what we intend to write. *Écriture* as a style of deconstructive interpretation implies wri-

ting as a repetition, writing as an inscription of signs that has already been engraved. Interpretation has no beginning and no end.

A literary work is viewed, then, as an open system of production within a closed (in the sense of the non-presence of the transcendental, sanctioning outside) game of signifiers. Hence, even if critics like Barthes, Todorov, Kristeva or Culler are limited in their tendency to subject the literary interpretation to the reasoning center (for instance, in the hard scientific impact of highly academic linguistics upon and in their own work) a deconstructive critic operates from within the depth of the Nietzschean *Gaia Scienza*, i.e. will begin from the fundamental act of surrendering to the text. While a structuralist will try to harden the solid ground under his feet, a deconstructive interpreter will try to lose it as a necessary condition for his interpretative act to open. Hence, as Miller defines modern American criticism it resembles Derrida's concept of dissemination:

The new turn in criticism involves an interrogation of the notion of the self-enclosed literary work and of the idea that any work has a fixed, identifiable meaning. The literary work is seen in various ways as open and unproductively productive. The reading of a poem is a part of a poem [...] interminable activity without necessary closure.⁹⁶

It is especially the "unproductive productivity" that invites a comparison with Derrida:

La dissemination [...] pour produire un nombre non-fini d'effets semantiques, ne se laisse reconduire ni a un present d'origin simple [...] ni a une presence eschatologique.⁹⁷

If, as Miller puts it, a reading of a poem belongs to poem, then it is but a rephrasing of a central deconstructive thesis of the co-belonging, of the being-with, of poetry and philosophy. No interpretation can be allowed if it does not unconceal philosophy in poetry and poetry in philosophy. For a deconstructive interpretation the text is a necessary mediation, trace, writing of philosophy. Derrida explains this view himself in his article on Benveniste:

It would be wrong to believe in the immediate and ahistorical accessibility of a philosophical argument, just as it would be wrong to believe that we could [...] submit a metaphysical text to some "scientific" deciphering grid — be it linguistic, psychoanalytical or other.⁹⁸

What Derrida promulgates philosophically Ridell translates into a specific hint for a theory of interpretation:

Bloom admits the Derrida/de Man position that there is no ontological difference between poetic and philosophical language and therefore that critical

interpretation based on metaphysical principles — of language as exterior of sense or truth, or the text as the vehicle of meaning — is false both to philosophy and literature.⁹⁹

Interestingly enough, Miller folds his discourse against itself and introduces a metaphor of the labyrinth as the only spatial and mythological figure able to deal with the situation as diagnosed by deconstruction:

What would be outside the labyrinth? More Labyrinth... According to Ruskin, the traditional labyrinth is "composed of a single path or track, coiled and recoiled on itself", and "the word Labyrinth properly means «rope-walk», or «evil-of-rope-walk» its first syllable being probably also the same as our English name «Laura» the path" [...]. One can never escape from the labyrinth because the activity of escaping makes more labyrinth, the thread of a linear narrative or a story.¹⁰⁰

The notion of the labyrinth meets another important concept, that of the path, and both return us to deconstruction as a style of philosophical architecture (or architectural philosophy). If Heidegger was reconstructing and raising the temple against the sky and the sea, a deconstructive interpreter (like Sarah Kofman, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Jean-Luc Nancy, Bernard Pautrat in France, or Paul de Man or Geoffrey Hartman in the USA) will try to dismantle the building of a text, attempt at seeing the sky and the sea in the fragments of the structure which never was anything but a fragment:

The deconstructive critic seeks to find [...] the element in the system studied which is alogical, the thread in the text [...] which will unravel it all, or the loose stone which will pull down the whole building.

The deconstruction [...] annihilates the grounds on which the building stands by showing that the text has already annihilated that ground. Deconstruction is not a dismantling of a structure of a text but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself. Its apparently solid ground is no rock but thin air.¹⁰¹

The interpretation which, traditionally, was meant to abolish fortuity of the text by submerging it in some larger doctrine ordered from the central point of the reasonable system here becomes precisely a domain of chance, of indeterminacy. An interpretation is a meaning of the text and its part at the same time. Hence, a certain BETWEEN-ness is another name for dissemination, interpretation and indecision; it becomes significant that one of the most widely explored writers, a writer who opens many promising deconstructive incisions in his texts, Stefan Mallarme, as the author of "un coup de dés n'abolira pas l'hasard" sanctions indecision as the main interpretative strategy. In his discussion of Mallarme's fragments (and in its insistence upon a fragmentary unit, upon a canonization of a fraction, deconstruction turns out to be a continuation

of what Jameson calls the formalist and structuralist projections) Derrida proclaims so advanced a practice of indecision that it extends unto the lack of such a basic and general strategy of determinacy as the title. As we have said, the Derridian text is a pre-text/pretext also because of the impossibility of such an inexact closure as a title:

[...] this double session [...] that [...] is concerned with the question *what is literature*, will find its corner BETWEEN (ENTRE) literature and truth, between literature and that by which the question *what is?* wants answering [...]. And now there is the *question of the title*.

This, among others that are just as decisive, is an extremely profound question raised by Goux, concerning "The still unthought thought about the network, a polynodal, nonrepresentative organization, a thought about the *text* [...] the text which nothing can entitle. Without title or chapter; without head (ing) or capital".

Mallarme knew this. Indeed, he had constructed this question, or rather undone it with a bifid answer, separating the question from itself, displacing it towards an essential *indecision* that leaves its very titles up in the air.¹⁰²

Jean Joseph Goux's text quoted by Derrida brings us obsessively back to the question of the architectural metaphor of writing. The architecture of the text, its interpretation, is a constant generation of meanings floating through words, i.e. it is **dissemination** which lies at the heart of reading, dissemination which "affirms the always already divided generation of meaning"¹⁰³. The structure of the text is of a magmatic, oniric nature. According to Sarah Kofman:

La stabilité de l'édifice est donc illusoire. Il flotte sans appui, au gré du hasard: les bases de la pyramide sont constituées par de dés. Produit pour nier le devenir, le system conceptuel repose sur lui, et comme lui il est jeu du hasard. Les pieces de la construction ne sont pas inamovible: il suffit de changer de perspectives, de jeter un autre coup de dés pour transformer les métaphor initiales et, avec elles, la face de l'architecture.¹⁰⁴

The text becomes a possibility of an error, and in the absence of the transcendental signifié it is **always erroneous**. Derrida consciously departs from the point which Marx, Heidegger, and Nietzsche demarcated as the beginning of modern philosophy:

Their thought could be called metaphilosophical, in that it no longer commands the World or Being to obey a transcendent ideal principle, source of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.¹⁰⁵

If, as Hartman puts it, Derrida erasing the concept of a center, meaning and truth of a text establishes a text as an error, and even absolutizes a text's error, then we can claim that a text and a world as écriture, as unlimited system of mediation ("un nombre non-fini d'effets se-

mantiques") are systems of ERRATA to consecutive errors of a text. The logic of deconstruction (and, as we know, it begins with a dark, alogical, place in a text), as well as the substitution game, transform errata in another layer of errors which call forth new errata etc. A **text is a sowing of words** in the "soil", i.e. in the empty places separating particular words; these empty spaces are, paradoxically, more important than material signs, as it is from this empty place, this hollowed out space, that a continuation of a word will emerge.

In other words, one can read *The Gutenberg Galaxy* and *De la grammatologie* as two different re-writings of the Cadmos myth. In both versions signs, letters, writing, grow from the dragon's teeth, but in McLuhan's lesson we encounter an ominous train of soldiers who are a **result, a production** of the mythical sowing (warriors are, for McLuhan, the most appropriate embodiment of the artificial order of the alphabet and linearity; also Derrida notices this aspect of writing as the bureaucratization of the world following the introduction of a commonly available notation; both thinkers have been, in this respect, preceded by important works of Harold Innis), while Derrida emphasizes the **very act of sowing**, of a scattering and dispersing of a unity which, in the final analysis, has never been the originary plenitude. McLuhan's concept of writing as a technology of communication which subversively imprints upon man its own message, does not secure for writing a position it cherishes in Derrida. Writing/printing are only two of, hopefully, numerous possible phases of the communicative revolution, while for Derrida writing constitutes ontological constants of the human condition once the man realizes that a sign is his existential element. Thus, in McLuhan's theory writing is only a temporary phasing out of the primeval unity with Being to be reintroduced by the electronic media; Derrida ponders the graphic notation as a fundamental lack of man's anchoring in Being conceived of as the originary plenitude.

For Derrida writing is not only a corner stone of the radically semiotic character of the human nature, but also it is a process which — metaphorically — takes place in nature itself. In his commentary to the linguistic aspects of Condillac's and Warburton's texts Derrida carefully accentuates a natural metaphor of writing as an agricultural process:

How does the ploughman proceed?

Economically. Arrived at the end of the furrow, he does not return to the point of departure. He turns ox and plough around. And proceeds in the opposite direction. Saving of time, space, and energy. Improvement of efficiency and reduction of working time. Writing by the *turning of the ox — boustrophedon — writing by furrows* was a movement in linear and phonographic script [...]. It is a matter of writing by furrows. The furrow is a line, as the ploughman traces it: the road — *via rupta* — broken by the ploughshare. The furrow of agriculture, we remind ourselves, opens nature to culture (cultivation).¹⁰⁶

But, as we have said, spaces between furrows are and, at the same time, are not empty; they are places of a future growth as spacing separating words of a text are **holes** which are **hopes** of interpretation. If, however, a text has been deprived of a **central** point, **final** meaning, **ultimate** truth, then what is left as a text is a **repertoire of errors** which, in the process of interpretation, find their **provisional** correction which can never be final. What is "absolutized" is not the possibility of correcting a mistake, but the essential, necessary, character of the error. In Derrida's deconstructive theory the text acquires the status of a purposeful error; as in psychoanalysis the child is the father of an adult, in deconstruction error is the origin of the text.

This, through a specific structure of temporality, places us again within the problematic of the oral. Each "erratum" can operate in a span of time assigned to it, thus it is and is not a correction of "mistakes", since it takes another moment of interpretation to define this erratum as faulty and introduce another one. Hence, an error is never removed, and retains its dynamic quality. Such a situation is reminiscent of the position of the oral poem which, due to its improvisatory character, cannot be

[...] revised in ANY way and [no errors] [...] have been erased. For, in such poems, there can be no "mistake": error is an active component here.¹⁰⁷

As a keen reader of marginal texts Derrida would relish in short essays of Isaac Disraeli (the father of Benjamin) published in London in 1849. In a short text which is an introduction to the philosophy of *errata* (still to be written by Jacques Derrida) Disraeli carefully distinguishes between the *errata* of printing errors which is mechanical and incidental, and the *errata* forming an extra layer added to the text, another text towering (Kofman's "la tour, le bastion [...] l'expression d'une architecture interne") over the available body of works, and which is thus a procedure somehow **natural**:

Besides the ordinary *errata*, which happen in printing a work, others have been purposely committed, that the *errata* may contain what is not permitted to appear in the body of the work.¹⁰⁸

Disraeli thinks, first of all, of all the procedures helping to overcome censorship, nevertheless he is right when he speaks of the *errata* as of text piled up upon another text. If a labyrinth is a road "coiled and recoiled on itself", then the text as *errata* is a word imposed upon another word. Availing ourselves of Disraeli's terminology we could locate the first *errata* in **printing**, while the other one, more profoundly rooted in the text takes place in **writing**.

If writing is, as in Derrida's theory, a broken, interrupted path, a *via rupta*, then spacings between words are the **house of errata**. The interpretation is *errata* (i.e. a correction of errors), but it is also a "mistake" itself. In the very word "errata" there lurks a tragedy and comedy of writing: it is opening and closing, a correction of errors, and a dissemination of errors. It would not be unjustified to apply Joycean/Derridian lexicographical strategy and spell the name of the French philosopher as **d-ERR-ida**, as the one whose very name entails and contains not only a possibility, but a **necessity of the errors as the ontological foundation of interpretation conceived of as écriture**. One of the numerous examples provided by Disraeli is here particularly pertinent:

Of all the literary blunders none equalled that of the edition of the Vulgate, by Sixtus V. His Holiness carefully superintended every sheet as it passed through the press; and, to the amazement of the world, the work remained without a rival — it swarmed with errata! A multitude of scraps were printed to paste over the erroneous passages, in order to give the true text. The book makes a whimsical appearance with these patches; and the heretics exulted in this demonstration of papal infallibility.¹⁰⁹

All the metaphoric gestures of Derrida's thought are present in this quotation: the **path** as the labyrinthine, Ruskinian "coiling and recoiling" of **distance**, also a "parcour", i.e. a road hopelessly entangled in distance, also in **reading** and **delay**, in **death** which is the heart of writing: "parcour" signifies a path and distance, and the verb *parcourir* unites the two meanings as it denotes both "travelling through a given area" and also "peruse, read with attention". In the act of reading we automatically, independent of our volition, establish the *errata*, a list of errors which, twisted together with what they supposedly correct, form another horizontal surface of the error (we ought to remind ourselves that the vertical metaphoricity is banned from deconstruction).

The human figure [...] cannot be represented from cursory and ignorant observation; it must be understood before it can be imitated.

— John Flaxman, *Lectures on Sculpture*

[...] so as these Nations Danes seldom travell'd without their Graef [...] a kind of point or stilleto, with which they us'd to carve out Letters and other Figures upon occasion [...].

— John Evelyn, *Sculptura, or the History and Art of Chalcography*

Drawing was earlier than writing and the earliest form of writing seems to have been picture drawing.

— J. H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*

Drawing is a thing so highly necessary, that Donatellus was wont to tell his Disciples [...] that to deliver it in a single word, he would say, **DESIGNE**, because it was the very Basis and Foundation, not only of this, but even of all those free and noble Sciences of Fortification, Architecture, Perspective, and whatsoever also pretended to any affinity with the Mathematics, as really leading the van, and perspective of them all.

— John Evelyn, *Sculptura*

At last the meaning of **line** has been elucidated in full: on the one hand its facetal and relationship, and on the other as a factor of principal construction in any organism in life as a whole [...] Both in painting and in any construction in general line is the first and the least thing.

— Alexandr Rodchenko, *Line*

What lives is exposed to other forces, but in such a way that, striving against them, it deals with them according to their form and rhythm, in order to estimate them in relation to possible incorporation or elimination. According to this angle of vision, everything that is is interpreted in terms of the living creature's capacity for life [...]. Everything "real" is alive, is



Drawing as
Weltanshauung/
Weltanschauung
as Drawing

"perspectival" in itself, and asserts itself in its perspective against others.

— Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*

Écrire et dessiner sont identiques en leur fond.

— Paul Klee, *Philosophie de la création*

Why was it necessary to replace type-set by manuscript? Khlebnikov himself explained: "There are 2 conditions: 1) mood changes the handwriting during the act of writing; 2) handwriting which has been changed in its own distinctive way by mood transmits this mood to the reader —independent of the words [...] the handwriting guides the reader by its faintest tremor. The dumb voice of handwriting".

— Eugenii Kovtun, *Varvara Stepanova's Anti-book*

Pour Jackson Pollock, le dessin était une forme de calligraphie, une marque aussi caractéristique que l'écriture. La traduction du graphique en pictural était donc un développement très naturel.

— Barabara Rose, *Barnett Newman: les oeuvres sur papier*

[...] language is first writing.

— Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*

Such is the power of writing to deconstruct, to space out, to open up a textual field where all linearity, all equivocality, all precision are swept away.

— René Denizot, *Readings*

The presentation of Derrida's and Heidegger's vision of literature (and one should insist on the most literal reading of the word "vision", as Heidegger, in good faith, derives from the Western metaphysics of light and sight, while Derrida helplessly trapped in the language of light tries to get to the pre-Platonic shadow of a philosophy free from dissemination) served two purposes. To begin with, it drew the outline of interesting hermeneutic (Heidegger) and posthermeneutic (Derrida) suggestions according to which literature (poetry) is either a most fundamental and ontologically valid preoccupation ("poetically man dwells on earth"¹), or constitutes the horizon of writing which coincides and demarcates the horizon of living ("there is an originary violence of writing because language is first [...] writing"²). The other reason is of a more heuristic nature: since writing (poetizing) is a mode of existence (either the most profound as in Heidegger, or the only accessible to man as in Derrida) we can read (and reading is also writing) literary texts as involuntarily self-centered. This self-centeredness goes back partly to Jakobson's poetic function of language, but, primarily, shifts a balance from the word focused on itself to the word which opens up the horizon of literature/writing. In other words, each phrase, each expression, demonstrate their mode of production, each word is already guilty of opening a vision of literature.

A word is literature not only in the sense of belonging to the body of written texts, but it constitutes literature because it surreptitiously writes a critical discourse on itself. **A written word is at the same time**

a writing word. Whether it admits such a possibility or not, a text is always a text disseminating other texts and, therefore, a critic, a hermeneut, is a messenger, a mediator between the revealed text of the written word and the hidden text of the writing word. Hence, the hermeneut inevitably finds himself in a stream of writing, and his work consists in his being aware of the fact that while writing he cuts through words only to reveal more words, through literature leads to more literature. The following section of the book will concentrate on Blake's prose and poetry as on a hidden, undisclosed movement towards a certain vision of literature. This movements pivots round the concept of the absence of a pure literature, i.e. a literature which would not contain its own critical discourse already implanted in its own words. We shall look at Blake's words as upon a dissemination of literature, incessant wandering of signifiers which forms the essence of writing.

1. A Yellow Mask of Death

We should die except for Death
In his chalk and violet robes. Not
to die a parish death.

— Wallace Stevens, *Like Decorations In a Nigger Cemetery*

Blake's thought seems to be caught in a fundamental debate between the face and the mask or, in terms of verbs, in a rupture between to display and to hide. Interestingly enough, Blake does not remain in a circle of themes and motifs, but sees the repercussions of the two schools of painting (Raphaelite vs. Venetian) in the very structure of material used in the process. Well before McLuhan, an English engraver knew that a medium can be an important message. Philosophically it implies a literal reading of the message as received from the forms. In *Annotations to Reynolds* Blake critically comments on Reynolds's opinion that "To understand literally these metaphors as the ideas expressed in poetical language seems to be [...] absurd [...]" (K, 473).

Technically, which aspect interests us here, the aesthetics of Blake is acutely aware of a texture of a painting, and thus understands a canvass, first of all, literally, i.e. as an interplay of not so much ideas, but an ideological interplay of the surface and paint. In *Descriptive Catalogue* the reader finds a significant passage on the quality and ideology of oil painting:

Oil has falsely been supposed to give strength to colours: but a little consideration must show the fallacy of this opinion. Oil will not drink or absorb colour enough to stand the test of very little time and of the air. It deadens every colour it is mixed with, at its first mixture, and in a little time becomes a yellow mask over all that it touches. (K, 565)

Oil is then not only a question of theatrics, of make-up, but also of a deadly mask which under a pretext of covering and protection destroys the surface, the skin, the face it is supposed to shelter. Oil "deadens every colour" because it promotes, what Blake himself called, "Broken Colours and Broken Lines" (K, 464), but, first of all, because its chemistry is detrimental to life. The chemistry of oil is a chemistry of death; lead used as an element of oil paint is distilled as a death factor:

[...] oil [...] turns every permanent white to a yellow and brown putty, and has compelled the use of that destroyer of colours, white lead; which, when its protecting oil is evaporated, will become lead again. (K, 566).

The main line of Blake's attack against oil painting repeats his most essential argument against chiaroscuro which is called "the Infernal Machine" (K, 582): oil blurs and blots colour and thus reintroduces chaos which outline was trying to counteract. A deadly mask of oil disfigures the face it is hiding, or rather disfigures it by the very fact that belonging to the realm of the shadow (a kingdom of "blotting and blurring demons" as Blake refers to it in *Descriptive Catalogue*, K, 581), it hides the face instead of unconcealing it, it generalizes about it, and thus cuts itself off from the "Minute Particular".

With this category we are coming back to the "Precision of the Pencil"; to a difference engendered role of drawing. Blake was aware of the fact that it is not a size or even a general character of a work that determines its specificity, but an immanent quality which he himself terms "Minute Discrimination" (K, 453) and which may be described as a degree to which one form stands out in its separateness from all other forms. In *Annotations to Reynolds* we read:

Fresco Painting is the Most Minute. Fresco Painting is Like Miniature Painting; a Wall is Large Ivory (K, 466),

and in *Descriptive Catalogue* Blake describes "high finished frescoes" where

[...] the colours would be as pure and as permanent as precious stones, though the figures were one hundred feet in height. (K, 566).

The purity of colours referred to removes or rather, historically speaking, precedes the "mask" of oil which throws its deadly shadow upon a colour in the Venetian or Flemish schools. But the "Precision of the Pencil" ultimately brings us to the concept of which one can never depart very far in Blake: purity of the revealed face is the work of OUTLINE. A criterion which Blake consistently uses both in case of big frescoes and fragile illuminations is a criterion of the LINE:

The great and golden rule of art, as well as of life, is this: That the more distinct, sharp and wirey the bounding line, the more perfect the work of art. (K, 585).

2. Difference and Character

The beautiful is nothing but the beginning of the terrible that we still barely endure, and we admire it so because it serenely disdains to destroy us.

— Rainer Maria Rilke, *First Elegy*

In the same way as Derrida's **difference** was a discreet unit of linguistic pronouncement ("Difference is articulation"³), Blake's **outline** is a category of existence ("Leave out this line, and you leave out life itself" K, 585). It cannot be overlooked that the line is a synonym of a **characteristic** line, a line is a feature, lineaments, an outline constitutes a face. In other words, an outline is placed in a position of a **signifier** designating its signified, the domain of outline is a realm of semiotic purposefulness measured by the adequacy of our **reading**. In *A Vision of the Last Judgment* Blake draws our attention to the philosophy of "Minute Particulars":

I intreat, then that the Spectator will Attend to the Hands & Feet, to the lineaments of Countenances; they are all descriptive of Character, & not a line is drawn without intention, & that most discriminate & particular. (K, 611).

Outline is a measure of difference and, at the same time, of a character ("know that where there are no lineaments there can be no character", K, 575). These two features make outline a carrier of meaning. This seems to be a reason why Blake nostalgically looks back (or rather listens back) to a traditional situation of the Western metaphysics in which a sign is a reflection, a necessary but inadequate representation of the original plenitude. A sign does not only differ from another sign, but, first of all, it reflects upon the original unity of things and signs where no language and no sign were needed. Thus, a sign shows itself as a scandal, a catastrophe, a cosmic disaster in the originally undifferentiated world. In this model which Derrida calls "onto-theological", a sign is necessary to demonstrate its own uselessness or, to say the least, its secondariness, fallenness and deprivation. A sign born out of distance and spacing attempts to render "an intact life [...] a song and inarticulate language [...] speech without spacing."⁴

Blake's philosophy of art is acutely aware of the problem of identity and difference. On the one hand, outline is a measure of the independence of things, and life is a process of differentiation ("How do we distin-

guish one face or countenance from another, but by the bounding line and its infinite inflections and movements?" K, 585), on the other hand, however, outline ("lineaments") is a sign, a vehicle, through which speaks some external power. In *A Descriptive Catalogue* we read:

The Beauty proper for sublime art is lineaments, or forms and features that are capable of being the receptacles of intellect; accordingly, the Painter has given in his beautiful man, his own idea of intellectual Beauty. (K, 580).

According to this definition a line is a "receptacle" of intellect, i.e. it serves as a representation of an external power, and, at the same time, shelters and contains it within its protective space. An outline as a tabernacle is a sanctuary of the external, all-powerful element, it contains the transcendence within which it has to be itself contained. In other words, outline stands between the outside (transcendental signified) and the inside (signifier), it is exposed to the outside (transcendence) and represents it, nevertheless it also contains it within its own "bounding line", tears it away from the original totality. Thus, although outline is caught by the dialectic movement of the inside and outside, it radically negates this division or, at least, questions it. The very semantics of the word "receptacle" implies a play of revaluation (it suggests that the holy is contained within it) and concealment (only the place, the habitat, of the holy is available, while the thing itself is hidden and inaccessible).

3. A Point, Line, and Name

The man who is named. Is myth.
Who is accosted by death. Is not
shaded into motivation.

— Iain Sinclair, *Suicide Brigade*

Outline is, then, a carving out of a portion of Being which makes itself manifest as a thing. It is a trace of a thing as existing in the original plenitude. By this very fact outline is connected with architecture: like the art of constructing edifices it erects a facade (contour, shape, wall, outline), but also lets us behind or into it (like into a house where the thing discussed is hidden). **The act of drawing a line is the act of naming and building: to live is to be able to name, or to repeat endlessly futile attempts at naming, the realm which defies any names, but still is recognizable and stands out in itself only against the background of a name.** Hence, a line and a name are implicitly the house of our being. Blake diagnoses this situation in *Milton*:

Creating form & beauty around the dark regions of sorrow,
Giving to airy nothing a name and a habitation.
Delightful, with bounds to the Infinite putting off the Indefinite,

Into most holy forms of Thought; such is the power of inspiration.
They labour incessant with many tears & afflictions,
Creating the beautiful House for the piteous sufferer. (K, 514—5).

Outline ("form") is a foundation of the aesthetic ("form & beauty") but also it is a speech ("name") and location ("habitation"). The key line in the above quotation states the relationship between a sign and a signified object: a sign imposes limits on Infinity, and thus gives form to the "indefinite". Blake's semiotics is founded upon a radical conviction that a sign is a human habitat which, through naming, calling things out of Infinity, relegates them to the sphere of thought: a thing signified — as a portion of Eternity — is a speech phenomenon of human thought.

If we juxtapose two quotations (one from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and the other from *Milton*) we shall undoubtedly notice a transition of a sign from the visual to the intellectual level:

The roaring of lions, the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea,
and the destructive sword, are portions of eternity, too great for the eye of
man. (K, 151)

[...] a name and a habitation [...] with bounds to the Infinite putting off the
Indefinite

Into most holy forms of Thought. (K, 515)

A sign which is "bounds to the Infinite" unfolds in thought; outline is this absolutely essential category which begins a sign, it is a signal for a sign to begin, it is a sign of a sign. Outline spaces out a sign, makes room for it to appear, and thus becomes a space (and a house) of a sign. The correlation between "bounds" and "thought" suggests that a boundary is not an end of something, but rather a promise of new developments which will promote it to a more dignified existence ("most holy forms of Thought"). Outline, by circumscribing an object, does not close it, but opens it to the thought: this seems to be the basic premise of Blake's semiotics.

In his essay on *Building, Dwelling, Thinking* Martin Heidegger performs a typical tour-de-force in his comments upon the word „Raum“:

What the word for space, *Raum*, designates is said by its ancient meaning. *Raum*, *Rum* means a place cleared or freed for settlement and lodging. A space is something that has been made room for, something that is cleared and free, namely, a boundary, Greek *peras*. A boundary is not at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its essential unfolding.⁵

This passage marks a transition between outline ("boundary") and architecture ("settlement") on the one hand, and ontology, on the other, possible. Since, as we know from Heidegger, "building" is also originally "being", outline is also the ontological category naming the territory

where a sign dwells. A line is the dwelling place of a sign as a manifestation of human "most holy Thought". In Heidegger's terms:

The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans are on the earth, is *buan*, dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell. The old word *bauen*, which says that man is insofar as he *dwells*, this word *bauen*, however, also means at the same time to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for, specifically to till the soil, to cultivate the vine.⁶

To draw a line is, then, an act of mercy or care; to open a possibility for a sign to appear is a protective and caring gesture, a movement of a pencil is the writing of responsibility. Blake confirms that "Science", which is a synonym of architecture, of a radical outline, of a complete difference between inside and outside "remains through Mercy", and it is through a protective field of science/architecture/outline that other disciplines develop. It is also a very special edifice which Blake constructs in *Milton*, as the habitation there is meant to shelter "the piteous sufferer", and close protectively upon "the dark regions of sorrow". Outline, a possibility of a sign, is a mode of showing one's pity which turns out to be a form-giving operation, that is to say, pity is an attitude generated by the awareness of difference: I will be pitiful for "the piteous sufferer" if, by giving him his unique form, I will make him aware of a difference between himself and the world.

Thus, Antamon in Blake's *Milton* helps the two unbodied Spectres,

[...] takes them into his beautiful flexible hands,

and the act of giving a form, of drawing an outline, is described as the other meaning of *bauen* which Heidegger painstakingly warns us not to forget: Antamon is a builder-cultivator. To build, to erect a wall, to outline, is also to deal with the earth: Antamon

[...] as the Sower takes the seed [...],

but he remembers that the outline not always celebrates simplicity but, like a facade, it is a place of a certain surplus of building, i.e. a place of adornment and ornament. To build, to draw, to cultivate is then also to create a surplus of meaning which inheres in the meaning itself. The one who draws a line is an architect, an agriculturalist, a moralist, and an artist:

As the Sower takes the seed or as the Artist his clay,
Or fine wax, to mould artful a model for golden ornaments. (K, 515)

The act of production of ornaments (which is an act of ploughing and

building at the same time) is a form-giving procedure of permanent duration:

The soft hand of Antamon draw the indelible line,
Form immortal with golden pen, such as the Spectre admiring,
Puts on sweet form [...] (K, 515).

4. Engraving and Medicine

Is it impossible after all that God
might give the command to kill his
son not to an Abraham who loves
his son but to an Abraham who
hates his son [...].

— Max Brod, *Heidentum, Christentum, Judentum*

In one of his last letters, dated 25 April 1827, the artist assures John Linnell of his better health ("I am going on better every day"), and progress in his work as an engraver: "I have Proved the Six Plates, & reduced the Fighting Devils ready for the Copper" (K. 879). Engraving which Blake studied with Basire for 7 years was for him an activity which, through drawing, linked modern art with the past, tried to display the ancient heritage underlying a modern surface. Engraving makes the surface tangible and noticeable, but at the same time dissolves it, makes it transparent, as if — paraphrasing Blake's famous aphorism — drawing not WITH but THROUGH the line. In Blake's comments to his own illustrations to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* we read:

In this Plate M^rB. has resumed the style with which he set out in life, of which Heath & Stothard were the awkward imitators at that time; it is the style of Alb. Durer's Histories & the old Engravers, which cannot be imitated by any one who does not understand drawing [...] (K, 592)

A historical movement from the surface ("M^rB") towards the depth ("the old Engravers") hinges on a fundamental role of drawing as the principal difference, and complies with a philosophical movement from the outward vision towards the inner eye. Blake sees Eternity, but does it through a sign which, in order to melt away, has first to appear and make its presence felt. Blake's eternity is a trace of a sign, its shadow and mirror image. Eternity is a sign's double. The line is "indelible", non-removable, as even its disappearance leaves a line as the felt emotion, hence the language Blake uses when speaking of such a union of inside and outside, surface and depth which constitutes the line is either emotional ("Eternity is in love with the production of time", K, 154) or medicinal: he calls engraving "salutary and medicinal" (K, 154). A me-

dicinal result of the engraved line is based on the fact that it is engraved, that is to say, that it does not glide over the surface, but starting from there penetrates the depth, opens and uncovers what was underneath the face of a thing. Thus, the engraved line has to be simultaneously outward and inward. Such a union, the status of a sign as a border phenomenon, invalidates to a large extent a traditional concept of a sign as divided into a signifying material form and a signified abstract content. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is dedicated to a defence of three basic "Contraries", and the second "Memorable Fancy" enlarges on one of them:

[...] first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul is to be expunged; this I shall do by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid. (K, 154)

The reader will have noticed that the use of adjectives like "salutary" or "medicinal" introduces indirectly a **state of disease which is diagnosed as a gap between a signifier and a signified, body and soul**. The illness is viewed as a discrepancy between an organism and the external world which brings danger and anxiety; soul becomes ill when threatened by outside which jeopardizes inside's purity and health. A disease affects the signifier while the abstract signified remains protected, as if it existed on a level unavailable for a disease.

Blake realizes that to abolish a distinction between body and soul means to put oneself in a very difficult situation with regard to a disease: either it extends the territory of a disease (from the identification of body and soul it follows that a disease can reach further and deeper) or it has to eradicate the very notion of an illness by exploding the surface which is usually a disease's dwelling place. What Blake is really interested in is the healthy interior hidden underneath the surface, but the very technique used to unveil the inside, the very medicine applied prolongs the existence of the diseased surface. The corrosives and fire used in the process of engraving do not remove the surface, but, so to say, unveil the inside, the depth, by saturating it with the elements of the surface. The very word "melting away" is significant since it implies only a change of the form of existence but not a radical removal or absence. In other words, the line "indelibly" drawn, cut into a copper plate participates both in the surface and depth reality; it is not a metaphoric sign used in the absence of another sign, but it is a metonymic contiguity of one and the other as participating in "the whole of life".

As we see, a medicinal practice of applying corrosives, of "printing in the infernal method" is both "salutary" (it brings back the unity of the person, overcomes the gap between a signifier and a signified) and deadly. Its deadliness is rendered by the element of fire "raging around

& melting the metals into living fluids" (K, 155) and by the desintegrating influence it exercises upon the surface. The medicine is a beneficial drug and a poisonous matter causing decay and decline ("corrosives"). Thus, on the perceptual level a unification of the signified and signifier can be either disastrous or miraculous, and its effect spans the whole gamut between a terminal disease and final recuperation. The former is evident in those who see with, the latter in those who see through the eye, as Blake demonstrates it in his letter to Dr. Trusler:

I see everything I paint in This World, but Every body does not see alike. To the Eyes of a Miser a Guinea is more beautiful than the Sun [...]. The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the Eyes of others only a green thing that stands in the way [...]. As a man is, So he Sees. (K, 793).

As it is easily noticeable a removal of the body/Soul controversy questions the possibility of only one, dominating, type of relationship holding between the signifier and signified. A sensual perception is a starting point (in a "salutary" application of the medicine of the line) for a chain of other perceptions originating in and from imagination's work upon the sensual material, or a blocking of the further way (when the medicine of the line is poisonous) and remaining within confines of one perceptual image. While the sun can be either a source of endless visionary, imaginary signs, it can also be limited to one particular sign (a coin). A line which in its indelibility opens and closes the split between the signifier and the signified is, like any medicine, either helpful or catastrophic depending on the person who uses it.

Such a situation is an incentive for Jacques Derrida who builds his well known text on *Plato's Pharmacy* upon this etymological-translational problems of the polysemy of the word "pharmakon" which, according to the French philosopher:

[...] without mistranslation, permitted the rendering of the same word by "remedy", "recipe", "poison", "drug", "philter" etc.⁷

The line is a principle of form but also a medicine and poison at the same time. If his is the case then the artist who uses it achieves not only aesthetic purposes but also pharmaceutical. He shapes, outlines things, draws their contour thus instating difference between them and the Origin, and also he drives out illness, *out-lines* it (i.e. rules it out, forces it outside) to restore the original health.

But the outside is never really outside but only a meeting place, a boundary, a line from which a movement can begin in both directions. The very action described as "salutary" refers both to an activity aiming at removing the dirt and waste matter, but also at chastising evil and

corruption. This is a possible meaning of Blake's phrase instructing us to "cleanse the doors of perception", and of another fragment from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* representing a printing house in Hell:

In the first chamber was a Dragon-Man, clearing away the rubbish from a cave's mouth. (K, 154)

The man who cleverly uses the line forms, cures, but also cleanses his habitation, and is, respectively, an artist, a doctor, and a Dragon-Man, a wizard or a magician, one who cleanses exercising his magical powers. The last two functions in Plato's language voiced again by Derrida are those of a "pharmakon" and a "pharmakeus". J. E. Harrison in his *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* claims that:

"Pharmakos" means simply "magic-man". Its Lithuanian cognate is "burin", magic; in Latin it appears as "forma", formula, magic spell [...]. "Pharmakon" in Greek means healing drug, poison and dye, but all, for better or worse, are magical.⁸

The line as a meeting place of outside and inside is a place where the ceremony of "pharmakos" is located. Interpreting this ancient Greek ritual of purification consisting in burning a "pharmakos", a man designated to be a scapegoat, a symbolic cause of the evil that overtook a city, Derrida notices that although the ceremony took place outside the polis nevertheless in essence was the epitome of the polis itself. In other words, the other, the evil shadow of the polis is inherently present within it, as a matter of fact is constituted and preserved by the polis:

That representative represents the otherness of the evil that comes to affect or infect the inside by unpredictably breaking into it. Yet the representative of the outside is nonetheless constituted, regularly granted its place by the community, chosen kept, fed, etc. in the very heart of the inside. These parasites were as a matter of fact domesticated by the living organism that housed them at its expense.⁹

The line, then, is both a medicine and a poison (it brings to light, cures an object of its former darkness of the "whole of Life", and with the same light it kills, "poisons" its domestication in the "whole of Life"), the place where the outside and inside meet in the ceremony called **engraving** which is the in-scription of the outside on the inside, and bringing to light, singling out what is inside, revealing the inside to the watchful eyes of the outside. In-scription, because it not only writes on the surface, but actually moves down, literally in-scribes a letter which suddenly acquires the status of a being of depth. This penetrating quality of engraving is coded even in the etymology of the term. John Evelyn in his erudite work *Sculptura or the History and Art of Chalcography and Engraving in Copper* (second edition 1755) derives

Scalpo, *Sculpo* from γλάσσω and γλύσσω [...]. The word in the Holy Tongue Πᾶλ which imports an opening (because the Plate, Stone or whatever else material they used *aperitur aliqua sui parte*, was somewhere opened when any thing is engraved upon it) [...].¹⁰

5. "Stony Law" and "God's Breath"

But life! But the triumph of life!
But the great Yes to all high, beautiful, audacious things!
— Friedrich Nietzsche, *Antichrist*

Engraving transports us already to the sphere of writing which, for Blake, as for Derrida, is more than a movement of a pen over a sheet of paper. Writing, as we have already seen, performed with a "golden pen" brings in effect the "indelible line", "immortal", "sweet form". It is by no means incidental that Blake does not speak of letters, but uses a more general concept of the form. Writing as an art of pictographic or ideographic communication referred to by Derrida as "the vulgar concept"¹¹, is also subject to criticism in Blake's theory. His attack on the inhuman ideology of Ten Commandments is founded upon a perception of the message as an extension of the medium. In the last "Memorable Francy" of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* we read:

I tell you, no virtue can exist without breaking these ten commandments.
Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse, not from rules. (K, 158)

The attack against the authoritarianism of the written moral code coupled with a critical perception and evaluation of writing as the very institution which instates authoritarianism in the structure of human life. All the versions of *The Everlasting Gospel* emphasize moral oppression; thus, Jesus in his attempts to unearth the roots of evil reveals the political and social elite and writing as perversion:

Throughout the land he took his course,
And traced diseases to their source:
He curs'd the Scribe & Pharisee,
Trampling down Hipocrisy. (K, 749)

Another version of the same poem concentrates on the moral dictatorship also inscribed upon society by Ten Commandments, and spread by writing:

What I call'd Humility, they call'd Pride.
He who loves his Enemies, betrays his Friends;
This surely is not what Jesus intends,

But the sneaking Pride of Heroic Schools,
And the Scribes ' & Pharisees' Virtuous Rules. (K, 751)

Blake discovers the political and restrictive function of writing which Levi-Strauss will describe and analyse in his comments upon the Nambikwara in *Les tristes tropiques* as the aggression of writing upon a living organism of a small community. Writing is pathological and perverse (it institutes moral evil), and by sanctioning the absence of the person whom the writer (Blake's "Scribe") is addressing it generates dispersion and alienation, thus helping the authoritarian system to triumph over the individual will. The very word "pathological" used with regard to writing appears in de Saussure's *Cours de linguistique generale* where it clearly draws upon what Derrida calls "the tradition which has always associated writing with the fatal violence of the political institution."¹²

This violence mediates between the elite and society, since the "Scribe" is not an original writer, but one who transmits in a written form, and thus commemorates, the decrees of others. The "Scribe" inscribes moral tyranny (Saussure speaks of "the tyranny of writing"¹³) upon the mind of the individual, and necessarily represents the oppression of the bureaucratic system.

From the earliest days a scribe was a special servant, a transmitter and eternalizer of power. Harold Innis in his brilliant study of the social and political impact of means of communication notices a sudden emergence of a specially privileged class of professional writers in ancient Egypt:

Writing had been restricted to governmental, fiscal, magical, and religious purposes [...]. After 2000 BC the central administration employed an army of scribes [...] [who] became a restricted class [...].¹⁴

It is not incidental that Urizen, the archetypal tyrant of Blake's mythology, is shown as a disseminator of writing via the promulgation of Ten Commandments:

Leading his starry hosts thro' the waste wilderness, he promulgates his ten commands (K, 159)

and the detailed description of writing as a political and intellectual violence is to be found in *The Song of Los*:

Thus the terrible race of Los & Enitharmon gave Laws & Religion to the Sons of Har, binding them more and more to Earth, closing and restraining, till a Philosophy of Five Senses was complete. (K, 246)

What follows writing is an existence under the oppressive shadow of the "Book of Brass" which is a source of centralism as a political principle.

"Why is one Law given to the Lion & the patient Ox" (K, 109) this question opens an attack upon writing which introduces both moral ("to restrain the child from the womb", K, 247) and political ("To cut off the bread from the city/that the remnant may learn to obey", K, 247) oppression.

Original Egyptian literature disseminated the image of the Scribe as an important intermediary between kings, centralized administration and society:

But the scribe, he directeth the work of all men. For him there are no taxes, for he payeth tribute in writing, and there are no dues for him.¹⁵

Similarly, Derrida rounds up his discussion of Plato's *Phaedrus* with a formula "the legislator is a writer"¹⁶, which repeats concisely what Innis translates into the language of religion and sociology:

Writing was a difficult and specialized art requiring long apprenticeship [...]. The god of writing was closely related to the leading deities and reflected the power of the scribe over religion. The scribe had the full qualifications of a special profession and was included in the upper classes of kings, priests, nobles, and generals, in contrast with peasants, fishermen, artisans, and labourers.¹⁷

A high position of the god of writing who in Blake's mythology is also a god of a mathematical diagram is based on the fact that the deity overrules the world, determines and explains everything by his "Stony Laws". He (Teuth, Urizen) is not only a god of writing but also a written God, a preface to the world, a preface which shuts out and silences the book it is introducing:

As the preface to a book, that is the word of a father assisting and admiring his work, answering for his son, losing his breath in sustaining, retaining, idealizing, reinternalizing, and mastering his seed.¹⁸

The writing of a scribe is, however, only a trace or imitation of another, more powerful script the origin of which is not human. As the scribe is a depositary of the language of the Pharisees, so the Pharisee is a secretary standing next to the original written message of God. Blake's myth of the origin of writing oscillates uneasily between the daemonic or providential interpretation of the fateful event. The most concise version of the story appears in the preface to *Jerusalem*:

Reader! lover of books! lover of heaven,
And of that God from whom all goods are given,
Who in mysterious Sinai's awful cave
To Man the wondrous art of writing gave:
Again he speaks in thunder and in fire!

Thunder of Thought, & flames of fierce desire:
Even from the depth of Hell his voice I heard
Within the unfathom'd caverns of my Ear.
Therefore I print; nor vain my types shall be:
Heaven, Earth & Hell henceforth shall live in harmony. (K, 621)

The myth in itself is far from original, and it re-tells the Biblical version of the beginning of writing which was "written by the finger of God" (*Exod. XXXL: 18*), what is interesting, however, is a double treatment given to writing placed between the terrible and the sublime and uneasily twisted together with the act of speaking. Thus, writing is "the wondrous art", but it makes its appearance in a terrifying scenery of "Sinai's awful cave". **Writing is a place where good and bad meet, in the same way as line was a meeting place of the inside and outside.** Besides, writing is another form of line making ("with golden pen" Antamon draws "the indelible line"). This leads us to a question of **good and bad writing** which translates itself back into the language of the inside and outside. A good writing is a script inscribed upon our soul, engraved on the very structure of our life, while its bad equivalent is a sign which exists in a total unrelatedness to ourselves. Hence, although both the Scribe and Jesus talk about letters and graphics, they necessarily mean two different things. In the "c" version of *The Everlasting Gospel* we read:

He [Jesus] was too Proud to take a bribe;
He spoke with authority, not like a Scribe.
Upon his heart with Iron Pen
He wrote, "You must be born again". (K, 750)

A bad writing of the scribe is strongly juxtaposed to the writing which writes truth (unlike the Scribe's which deals with a "bribe") the latter, however, is of a purely metaphorical character. The inscription of truth upon the soul is metaphorical not only in the sense that Plato gives it in *Phaedrus* where it signifies the true knowledge of oneself which has to remain imperceptible as it is buried deeply inside. Here we do not, as a matter of fact, see the letters inscribed, but only read — as it were — the man upon whose soul they have been imprinted as a sign of other signs. God's writing is metaphorical, and his Hand is reflected in the man's face. Of God's writing Hand one could say what Derrida says about Plato and his script:

It is not perceived. Only interpreted, read, deciphered. [...] An inscription, the Delphicon gramma, which is anything but an oracle, prescribes through its silent cipher [...].¹⁹

Human behaviour, metaphorically speaking — human face, is the only way to know the script of God, and thus the sacred writing can

only be intuited, but never perceived; a face becomes a letter of God's writing which can be deciphered and thought of in terms of a profane human notation. This notation, however, in the process of interpretation, multiplies signs, and folds them upon one another. Using Derridian categories we could claim that writing, both good and bad, is nothing but a **preface** to the text that will remain for ever imperceptible or/and a citation from another source, quotation of another letter. If we could coin two, rather risky, terms we could describe this situation of writing as a general "prefacibility" and "citationability" of the written sign. In Jacques Derrida's poetic phrase:

Time is the time of the preface; [...] space [...] is the space of the preface. The preface would thus occupy the entire location and duration of the book.²⁹

God is referred in Blake's texts as the one "from whom all books are given", i.e. as the source of all books, as the superbook, the Book of the books, writing itself. It follows, then, that even God is a preface, a citation, a spacing, a difference characteristic of writing. This movement, this endless procession of signs, is topped in Blake's fragment by the other layer of metaphor which combines God's writing with voice. God's hand of which human face is but a quotation, turns out to be a replica, a replacement of God's breath. Thus, although writing is "wondrous" (it allows expression), it is at the same time begotten in an "awful" place, "awful" because alienating the letter from being seen directly. This trap is removed when frequent allusions to the accoustic quality of God's communication are considered. Thus, God "speaks" "again" where "again" suggests strongly that the original writing of God was only a metaphoric rendition of his voice. This voice appears two lines later, when its function is analogous to that of the outline: it unites the inside and outside. The voice is heard deep inside ("the unfathomed caverns of my Ear"), but then it surfaces, emerges, without losing touch with its origin of which it is an echo ("Therefore I print").

The written mark is an echo, a repetition of the accoustic sign; God does not write (if he does, he does it only metaphorically), but speaks. Such an attitude helps Blake to avoid recognizing a situation which, according to Derrida, is symptomatic for the Western metaphysics, a branch of knowledge that cannot function without the onto-theological concept of the central point, final, transcendental signified, absolute presence. While Derrida accepts human activity as the endless wandering of signifiers, traditional metaphysics confines this movement to the exchange between the signifier and signified, and establishes a place which is a source of order, a place of origin. Blake seems to be afraid of such a semiotic void, and therefore his ethical program of revaluation of all values is intrinsically linked with the structure of the sign which does

not tolerate the absence of the addressee (Derrida's "L'absence du destinataire."²¹)

Blake's rendition of the Biblical story of Jesus and Mary Magdalen is preeminently dedicated to a desperate effort to establish a point which would destroy the discreteness of writing, but which, at the same time, would constitute a boundary, a limit of signifying beyond which we could not move:

Moses commands she be stoned to death,
What was the sound of Jesus' breath?
He laid His hand on Moses' Law:
Writ with Curses from Pole to Pole,
All away began to roll:
The Earth trembling & Naked lay
In secret bed of Mortal Clay,
On Sinai felt the bloody shrine,
And she heard the breath of God
As she heard by Eden's flood:
"Good and Evil are no more!"
"Sinai's trumpets, cease to roar!"
"Cease finger of God, to write!" (K, 754)

As we can easily notice the written is constantly juxtaposed to the spoken, the hand is counterbalanced by the mouth. "Moses' Law", representing what Blake called a "Thou shalt not" type of morality, is a hard surface covered with hieroglyphics marking the absence of the divine element: we know, at least since Derrida, that writing implies a radical absence, signifies a vacuum on one end of the communication process. Writing is again associated with oppression as the stony tablets are "writ with Curses", and in an earlier text Blake would suggest that a world of political and social tyranny is a world of writing where even "the clouds are writ with curses". In the same way in which in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* Blake melts away the surface unearthing the links between the surface sign and its ontological rootedness in the "whole of Life", in *The Everlasting Gospel* the laws are written or carved on the surfaces of rock begin to "roll away". The secret which is revealed is the mystery of voice, and graphology becomes pneumatology.

With breath which is the first and ultimate exhalation of the Absolute we overcome the problem of the infinite movements of signifiers. **God** as the ulterior, **transcendental signified** makes all the semiotic relationship clear and equivocal, establishes a firm and originary beginning which expresses itself in the spoken element. God who uncovers the truth, who brings himself to the light of Being and who appears, to use Heidegger's phrase, on the clearing of Being stops writing, and is the source of voice. In sartorial terms: writing in its hieroglyphic character hides and covers

the truth, while a living speech of God tears away the disguise and demonstrates the **nakedness** of truth.

A traditionally Western belief in the proximity of voice and Absolute lurks also in the conviction that the ultimate, final nakedness of an object can be achieved, and thus nakedness is the transcendental signified of all the sartorial signifiers of the written language. In the fundamental text of Jacques Derrida one finds the following diagnosis of the malaise of the Western metaphysics, the diagnosis also applicable to Blake's philosophical predicament of choice between writing and speaking:

[...] writing. The letter, the sensible inscription, has always been considered by Western tradition as the body and matter external to the spirit, to breath, to speech, and to the logos. And the problem of soul and body is no doubt derived from the problem of writing from which it seems — conversely — to borrow its metaphors.²²

Blake also sees the body/soul controversy as resulting from the excess of power of the written, dead letter of the "Moses' Law" over the living organism, from "stony laws" rendering:

[...] that a Lawless thing
On which the Soul Expands its Wing. (K, 755),

but the fundamental creed of his philosophy which holds that "Man has no Body distinct from his Soul" (K, 149) is frequently depicted in the metaphor of garment covering or hiding the revelation of truthful nakedness. Thus, the body/soul dilemma is translated into the body/clothes controversy. It is precisely in terms of this opposition that a conflict between a romanticized version of the original inhabitants of the English Islands and the Romans is represented:

The Britons [...] were naked civilized men, learned, studious, abstruse in thought and contemplation; naked, simple, plain in their acts and manners; wiser than after-ages. They were overwhelmed by brutal arms [...].

The dead and the dying, Britons naked, mingled with armed Romans, strew the field beneath. (K, 577, 580).

Blake carefully stresses that the "naked" Britons are inspired people whose poetry is delivered orally, and who in their poems, songs, code certain epic state of the world. The spoken word is the domain of life, and it can die only with the death of the one who speaks; writing severs this vital link, as its origin is connected with the absence of the addressee, hence writing is born of death and as such can be a recording but precludes a participation. To use Blake's terminology: the written word cannot "attend" (Heidegger's "waiting upon") but only observe, it dies before it starts living, or it lives only when dead — the written word is a vampire.

Among these the last of the Bards who were capable of attending warlike deeds, is seen falling, outstretched among the dead and the dying, singing to his harp in the pains of death. (K, 580)

The intellectual knot of concepts related with the spoken word would entail notions like nakedness (vs. clothing), heroism of participation (vs. pastoralism of quiet observation), health (vs. sickness), the belief in the golden age (vs. derogatory quality of the present)). All these points which constitute the basic mythology of speech controverting the reality of writing are clearly present in the final section of the quoted fragment of *A Descriptive Catalogue* where they once again coincide with the problematic of form, the supremacy of line over colouring. In the passage cited below the aesthetic creed unnoticeably becomes a social utopia of a sane and healthy, naked and civilized society:

The flush of health in flesh exposed to the open air, nourished by the spirits of forests and floods in that ancient happy period, which history has recorded, cannot be like the sickly daubs of Titian or Rubens. Where will the copier of nature, as it is now, find a civilized man, who has been accustomed to go naked? Imagination only can furnish us with colouring appropriate, such as is found in the Frescoes of Rafael and Michel Angelo: the disposition of form always directs colouring in works of true art. As to a Modern Man, stripped from his load of clothing, he is like a dead corpse. Hence, Rubens Titian, Correggio and all of that class, are like leather and chalk; their men are like leather, and their women like chalk, for the disposition of their forms will not admit of grand colouring [...] (K, 580—1).

6. God's Dictate

Three things, tiny, fugitive: a song,
a sunbeam, a glance. So, at first,
I thought they had entered into me
in order to remain there and be lost
in me.

On the contrary: they took possession
of me, and bore me away.

— Teilhard de Chardin, *Pensées*

If the line was an actualization of theoretical, aesthetic instructions, it was at the same time a socially and historically directed movement towards the past which eventually provided us with a point beyond which the movement was no longer conceivable. The basic premise of Blake's historiography and anthropology, which are both rooted in a somewhat undecisive relationship between speech and writing, is that there is a radical possibility of the movement backwards which is not only a motion towards what is past, but, first of all, towards what is most significant. Blake's vision of history as inscription trying to recover the stage which preceded writing is a history which, in writing, tries to attain the area

where no writing was possible and necessary. It is, then, a wandering towards the Origin.

Nevertheless, and this demarcates a very important moment in Blake's thought, a moment in which he seems to see the illusive character of his efforts, and thus is on the verge of breaking away from the Western tradition of metaphysics, a moment when he is painfully aware of non-existence of the origin which can haunt his mind, but which cannot make its appearance. For Blake, the origin is a necessary condition of the world, but, simultaneously, it exists as its own absence, it absences itself from the world, and thus can appear only as a sign, a mark, a print, something **engraved** upon the surface of the world, as writing, i.e. as a piece already broken into fragments. Blake marks a moment in the Western thinking which still admitting the necessity of the origin, the inexorable character of the liaison between the signifier and the signified, intuited already the difficulty which made the search for the origin a mythic, eternal, neverending procedure. Thus, art becomes more and more rooted in writing, in difference, in a movement of signifiers, thus acquiring the characteristics of what Derrida calls a *trace* (*trace*), and which transforms all the signification process into "un jeu formel de différence, c'est-à-dire de traces:

Il s'agit de produire un nouveau concept d'écriture. On peut l'appeler gramme ou différence. Le jeu de différences suppose en effet des synthèses et des renvois qui interdisent qu'à aucun moment, en aucun sens, un élément simple soit présent en lui-même et ne renvoie qu'à lui-même. Que ce soit dans l'ordre du discours parlé ou du discours écrit, aucun élément ne peut fonctionner comme signe sans renvoyer à un autre élément qui lui-même n'est pas simplement présent.²³

The concept of writing which in Derrida's philosophy becomes the stigma of all the philosophy is also evidently present in the living speech, is also traceable in Blake's thought. On the one hand, in *The Everlasting Gospel* God's writing is abolished, erased, and we are left with the phenomenon of the voice ("God's finger, cease to write!"), with the "Presence Divine" which is a typical way of interpreting living speech and presence as identical. The main thesis which Derrida expatiates upon in *De la grammatologie* is exactly this economy of meaning and sense of being which can replace presence with voice:

We already have a foreboding that phonocentrism merges with the historical determination of the meaning of being in general as *presence*, with all the subdeterminations which depend upon this general form and which organize within it their system and their historical sequence (presence of the thing to the sight as *eidos*, presence as substance (essence) existence [*ousia*], temporal presence as point [*stímè*] of the now or of the moment [*nun*], the self-presence of the cogito, consciousness, subjectivity, the co-presence of the

other and of the self, intersubjectivity as the intentional phenomenon of the ego, and so forth).²⁴

The element of phonocentrism is markedly present throughout Blake's writings. It is manifest not only as a major attribute of transcendence which makes its presence accoustically felt, unlike the daemonic Urizen or Jehovah who express themselves in the oppressive medium of writing, but also as the **origin of the text**. The author, the writer, is a God's scribe, the writing hand of the speaking voice. The accoustic origin of many of Blake's texts is recognized signalled by the poet himself:

[...] then I see the Saviour over me
Spreading his beams of love & dictating the words of this mild song.
(J. K, 622)

My Fairy sat upon the table and dictated EUROPE (*Eur. K*, 238)

"Piper, sit thee down and write",
"In a book that all may read".

And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote ma happy songs,
Every child may joy to hear.

(*SI. K*, 111)

Hear the voice of the Bard!
Who Present, Past, & Future, sees;
Whose ears have heard
The holy Word
That walk'd among the ancient trees.

(*SE, K*, 210)

When God commanded this hand to write,
In the studious hours of deep midnight [...]

(*PPick. Ms. K*, 430)

I lost a brother & with his spirit I converse daily [...] and now write from
his Dictate.

(*Let. K*, 797)

[...] I am under the direction of Messengers from Heaven, Daily & Nightly [...]"
(*Let. K*, 812)

Nevertheless, these traces of Divine Presence are exactly traces, and the dictate of the transcendental voice, although beyond any doubt real, is trapped in the movement of signifiers. The writings of Blake are located in the distance between the intuition of the origin and its actuali-

zation. Thus, in *A Descriptive Catalogue* we find two important statements: the first places objects of art in the perspective of inoriginality:

No man can believe that either Homer's Mythology, or Ovid's, were the production of Greece or Latium; neither will any one believe, that the Greek statues [...] were the inventions of Greek Artists [...] (K, 565)

The other statement enhances the lack of originality and establishes a chain of signifiers which modify each other and construct a set of interrelations where the origin is either inaccessible or postponed till undefined future. Commenting upon his own pictures of Nelson and Pitt Blake claims that the presence of the characters, the "now" of the pictures, the *ousia*, is inscribed in the chain of signifiers with a somehow "lost" original (signifié):

The two pictures of Nelson and Pitt are compositions of a mythological cast, similar to those Apotheoses of Persian, Hindoo, and Egyptian Antiquity, which are still preserved on rude monuments, being copies from some stupendous originals now lost or perhaps buried till some happier age. (K, 565)

The interplay of a "copy" and "original" is the interplay of the "written" and "spoken" sign with Blake himself engrossed in the dangerous game of signification with a bracketed, withheld signifié (the original is lost and buried). The absence of the original brings us again to the concept of writing which seems to be hiding at the heart of Blake's thought torn between the temptation of the origin and the vanity of such a desire. It is imagination which intervenes and tries to bridge the gap between the spoken and the written, or rather between the disruptive conspiracy of writing which disturbs the paradisiacal quietism of speaking. But imagination is nothing else but a continuation of the outline in that it constitutes a place where the Inside (what we see with the inward eye) meets the Outside (what we produce, project, deliver, to be seen externally as a form). In other words, imagination conceals and confines in itself the seed of writing. It is true that the concept of imagination seems to be very far from writing, as imagination emphasizes the longing for the origin and the source, for that ultimate presence, the *ousia* of Greek philosophers. Hence, "Jesus consider'd Imagination to be the Real Man & says I will not leave you Orphans & I will manifest myself to you" (*AnB*. K, 774), and this is also why "Imagination has nothing to do with Memory" (*An. Wordsw.* K, 783).

7. That Dangerous „Something Else“

The voyeur, the peeper, the Peeping Tom, is a dark comedian. He is repulsive in his dark anonymity, in his secret invasion. He is pitifully alone. But he is able through the same silence and concealment to make unknowing partner of anyone. The voyeur is masturbator.

— Jim Morrison, *The Lords. Notes on Vision.*

Memory, frequently attacked in Blake's texts, is inherently attached to the concept and emergence of writing. Plato sees it in Phaedrus as entangled in an uneasy opposition and paradox with forgetfulness: writing which supposedly aids human memory as a matter of fact destroys it by substituting real, existential and ontological involvement in being with a citation, remembrance of something that we can only commemorate, something that has already happened and cannot be brought to any vital contact with our present being. King Thamus stresses the fact that "this invention will produce forgetfulness in the soul of those who have learned it because they will not need to exercise their memories, being able to rely on what is written [...]. So it's not a remedy for memory, but for reminding, that you have discovered".²⁵

In other words, memory as it appears in Plato seems to be divided into "living" and "dead", the former, entering in a vital bond with ourselves, the latter functioning simply as help to re-call, to categorize, to systematize, events, to make a library of the past from which we can, at will and with no existential consequence, demand information. The living memory is again the domain of the outline since it blurs the distinction between the Inside and Outside (past and present, absence and presence), while the "natural" memory reinstates this division by insisting upon the priority of the soul (inside) which uses the data of the past (outside) in a purely instrumental, tyrannical way.

Also Reynolds in his broodings upon art is aware of a similar situation which in his theory appears masked as the opposition of "reason" and "habitual reason". The latter is, like Plato's memory, attached to the human soul by means of a fundamentally existential bond: whatever appears as its element is inextricably entangled in the substance of life on the subconscious level which fact prevents "habitual reason" from an easy identification with memory as it is commonly understood. Existentially valid memory has nothing to do with individual reconstructing of the past events; it is a surface manifestation of complex processes resulting in, what Reynolds calls "collective observation" which is nothing else but a phenotype of the human mind: it is the final inscription the

history of which is lost "forgotten"). In short, when Blake attacks memory and reason, and Reynolds as their priest in painting, he overlooks Reynolds's recourse to this variety of reason which is very far from "reminding" and constitutes a kind of memory bereft of memory which, despite the ambiguous name, is a pertinent description of the human experience. In the thirteenth *Discourse* Reynolds holds that:

There is in the commerce of life, as in Art, a sagacity which is far from being contradictory to right reason, and is superior to any occasional exercise of that faculty [...] [which] does not wait for the slow progress of deduction but goes at once, by what appears a kind of intuition, to the conclusion. A man endowed with this faculty, feels and acknowledges the truth, though it is not always in his power [...] to give a reason for it; because he cannot recollect and bring before him all the materials that gave birth to his opinion; for very many and very intricate considerations may unite to form the principle [...] though these in process of time are forgotten, the right impression still remains fixed in his mind.

This impression is the result of the accumulated experience of our whole life, and has been collected, we do not always know how, or when. But this mass of collective observation [...] ought to prevail over that reason, which however powerfully exerted on any particular occasion, will probably comprehend but a partial view of the subject; and our conduct in life as well as in the Arts is, or ought to be, generally governed by this habitual reason [...]. (R, 230—1).

Reynolds's remarks help us to understand that, as Derrida notices, what Plato is attacking in the concept of writing

[...] is not simply recourse to memory but, within such recourse, the substitution of the mnemonic device [Plato's "reminding" — TS] for live memory, of the prosthesis for the organ [...]. The boundary (between inside and outside, living and non-living) separates not only speech from writing but also memory as an unveiling re (re-)producing a presence from re-memoration as the mere repetition of a monument; truth as distinct from its sign, being as distinct from types [...] the *ménème* instead of being present to itself in its life as a movement of truth, is supplanted by the archive, evicted by a sign of re-memoration or of com-memoration.²⁶

Blake seems to move in a similar enchanted circle which he can neither break nor transcend. He is actually aware of the difference between nature and imagination as, for example, in his comment upon Dante where the lines between the two concepts are particularly sharp:

[...] the Goddess Nature Memory is his Inspirer & not Imagination the Holy Ghost. (ND. K, 785)

Similarly, in his comments on Reynolds Blake categorically claims that

A Work of Genius is a Work not to be obtained by the Invocation of Memory & her Syren Daughters, but by Devout Prayer to that Eternal Spirit [...] (K, 457).

What Derrida calls the opposition between living (memory) and nonliving (com-memoration) surfaces in Blake's remarks *On Homer's Poetry & on Virgil* which conclude with a much quoted aphorism:

Grecian is Mathematic Form: Gothic is Living Form, Mathematic Form is Eternal Existence. (K, 778).

"The Reasoning Memory" is not only the extension of Urizenic powers of geometry which petrifies the living truth and imposes upon them the artificial, immovable order of a pair of compasses (as shown in Blake's illustrations *Newton* and *The Ancient of Days*), but is intrinsically linked with the political and social reality. The imperial and centralized state ("Warlike state", as Blake calls it in *On Homer's Poetry*) is cut off from Being and operating in the void and alienation from the society, it exerts its influence upon it. Bureaucracy and the governmental machine is viewed by Blake as a deadly surplus, a murderous, parasitic, structure growing on the living organism. **The political doctrine presents itself as an economy which substitutes real life with an imitation**, erases the living, and introduces the non-living.

Princes appear to me to be fools. Houses of Commons & Houses of Lords appear to me to be fools; they seem to me to be something Else besides Human Life. (PA. K, 600).

In the "Warlike state" life is supplanted by a dangerous "something Else" the perilous character of which is constituted by the enormous and all-encompassing influence which constructs another, artificial, imitative, world replacing reality. It is interesting to see how intricately Blake weaves the pattern of the mechanisms of the dangerous "something Else" which spans politics, economy, and arts:

The wretched State of the Arts in this Country & in Europe, originating in the wretched State of Political Science, which is the Science of Sciences, Demands a firm & determinate conduct on the part of Artists to Resist the Contemptible Counter Arts Establish'd by such contemptible Politicians as Louis XIV originally set on foot by Venetian Picture traders, Music traders, & Rime traders, to the destruction of all true art as it is this day. (PA. K, 600).

An adjective "contemptible" secures the identical treatment of political and aesthetic malaise of the epoch as forms of a false consciousness based on the non-living remembering, the "Reasoning Memory" which cannot produce but only turn up self-repetitive data and information. The dangerous "something Else", a parasitic growth of culture is, as it were, a folding, a mirror image of this culture and, thus, blocks a possibility of creative work, of production, and leaves open only the way to re-production, i.e. to writing. In a political state, as described by Blake, culture becomes only a repetition of what was (the dead skill of remind-

ing, while the living memory would be the domain of "what has been"), a false consciousness is mind's folding upon itself and thus disturbing the balance between the inside and outside. Hence, Blake attacks "Venetian Picture traders" as those who betrayed the line (a place where the inside and outside form a unity); the false consciousness of writing founded upon the non-living is aesthetically representable as a priority of colour over line. Such a writing will then describe not so much memory itself but "monuments, inventories, archives, citations, copies, accounts, tales, lists, notes, duplicates, chronicles, genealogies, references. Not memory but memorials."²⁷

This is a situation which Blake diagnoses in his contemporary society, where the state and social system are overwhelmed by the idea of bad writing:

[...] a Warlike State never can produce Art. It will Rob & Plunder & accumulate into one place, & Translate, & Copy, & Buy, & Sell, & Criticise, but not Make. (*OHP*. K, 778).

Marginally, we can notice that Flaxman, although less critically minded than Blake, tends to ascribe to the military spirit of the Greeks and Romans a crucial position in the evaluation of their art:

The principal compositions of Roman sculpture, the best of which [...] were executed by Greek artists [...] breathe the spirit of the people they commemorate — war, conquest, and universal dominion [...]. They are the mere paragraphs of military gazettes vulgar in conception, ferocious in sentiment.²⁸

In Blake's vision of culture the Greek and Roman civilizations and their 18th century continuations represented war and political economy which introduced and spread centralization of power and disintegration of the city-state communities. This was founded upon writing as a means of administration and, in turn disseminated bad writing as a code of a new social behaviour that Innis describes as a shift "from the voluntary to the obligatory"²⁹, or in Blake's terms from "Innocence" to "Experience".

A similar diagnosis is to be found in more recent scholarship. Hence we read that "in the last resort in the Greek period military ideals overlie and overrule all others."³⁰

Although more democratic than Rome, the Greek culture helped to build up the Roman Empire:

The spread of writing contributed to the downfall of the Republic and the emergence of the empire. With the growth of administration the power of the emperor was enhanced and in turn used to secure new support.³¹

Also political science emerges in Greece, and its inception, although yet free from Blake's "contemptible" involvements, paved the way for the future concentration of power:

Political science, ignored by the Phoenisians, became to the Greeks the highest of practical sciences, the science of man, not as a trader but as a man, fulfilling his function as a member of the social organism [...].³²

It may be precisely this difference between the "trader" and the "man" that makes Blake more sympathetic towards the Greeks than towards Romans. Absolute monarchism was present in Greece as a negative power successfully regulated and suppressed by the mechanism of the oral tradition:

The powerful oral tradition of the Greeks and the flexibility of the alphabet enabled them to resist the tendencies of empire in the East towards absolute monarchism and theocracy.³³

All the activities enumerated by Blake (rob, plunder, accumulate, translate, copy, buy, sell) demonstrate that the bad writing is a repetition itself involved in the very economy which **trades** and **substitutes**, rather than **creates** new goods. Translating transforms one text into another text which although seemingly different is essentially the same (the paradox of translating is that it changes the same into the same, and thus destroys the Other), buying and selling interchange objects the value of which is the same (provide us with an equivalent which is but another name for the same), criticism is a movement of signifiers transforming one text into another ("le texte qui ne se produit que dans la transformation d'un autre texte."³⁴

The idea of the Other which is removed from writing, of the sign folded upon itself, finally that "something Else" which we qualified as "dangerous", all relate to what Derrida calls "supplement" and considers to be the essential feature of writing. In *De la grammatologie* the phrase "supplement" is used frequently, but all the shades of its meaning focus in a fragment of J. J. Rousseau's *Confessions* in which the French philosopher, one of the villains of Blake's philosophical world, gives this name to the habit of **masturbation**, that ultimate case of the man folded upon himself and, at the same time, conceiving of "something Else" to protect himself from the awareness of the fold. Rousseau's text speaks of "that dangerous means of assisting it [innocence — TC] [*ce dangereux supplément*] which cheats nature and saves up for young men of my temperament many forms of excess at the expense of their health, strength, and, sometimes, their life."³⁵

What is significant in the passage is the analogy between the masturbatory habit and the inherent quality of writing: both are founded upon "cheating", both form "something Else" which we temporarily, at least, accept as reality, finally — both contain within themselves a peculiar mixture of a poison and remedy, both are **pharmakon** as described in Derrida's famous essay.

8. Mimesis

In 1832, Gropius was astounding Paris with his pleorama. The audience was transformed into the crew aboard a ship engaged in a battle. Fire, screaming, sailors, drowning.

— Jim Morrison, *The Lords. Notes on Vision*

In our discussion of the passage quoted from Blake's comments on Homer we have purposefully omitted a verb which, from the point of view of Blake's philosophy, seems to be a central item in the philosophical glossary. It also draws upon the problematic of writing and supplement, since its very semantics carries with it a necessity of reproduction or/and a danger of imitation, of secondariness and lack of originality which substitutes a replica for an original. Thus, the so far left out verb "copy" inscribes itself in a chain of signifiers which, like

[...] writing, pedagogy, masturbation, and the pharmakon share the property of being — with respect to speech, nature, intercourse, and living memory — at once something secondary, external, and compensatory, and something that substitutes, violates, and usurps.³⁶

Mimesis, discussed so widely in Plato's dialogues, is a central theme that unites pedagogy, masturbation, writing, and pharmakon in one chain of the substitution processes. It is mimesis in its ontological and aesthetic consequence that introduces into Western philosophy the theme of the original as opposed to the copy, of what Plato in *Sophist* referred to as "divine" and "human craftsmanship" (respectively, *phytourgia* and *demiourgia*). The surface value of copying seems to lie in the relationship of inferiority that exists between the original (*eide*) and the manufactured object which is ontologically dependent, repetitive, and profoundly indebted to its master model. From here we can depart in two directions:

1) towards the depreciation of a copy as a mere copy;

2) towards such an understanding of this process that will uncover a radical necessity of copying, and the very procedure of repeated, self-propelled imitation will become a source of value, and a mere copy will be transformed into as much as a copy.

The first movement is basically Platonic although the philosopher is far from consistency in his theories. In *Republic* he would claim that Gods create originals of things which surround man, while in *Sophist* the process of copying is pushed one step further, as the Gods do not deal with originals but concentrate and produce natural objects which, in turn, are copied by man.

Nevertheless, in both cases the mimetic activity is looked upon as a necessary evil mediating between the impossibility of the presence of the ideal models and man's rootedness in the presence of the natural, i.e. copied objects. The crucial point Plato is making in *Republic* turns this text into a key to the whole Western philosophy as it inscribes the process of living into the double mimesis. Plato's argument centers upon the conviction that if natural objects remain inferior reflections of the noumenal world of ideas, then things created by men are doubly removed from the center and the source of originality since they reflect and copy what in itself was a reflection. In other words, mimesis on the human level is an imitation of imitations, a sign of a sign, a writing which imitates speaking.

The mimetic, self-reproducing technique of dissemination rather than production (dissemination can be defined as "unproductive production") is here considered nostalgically from the point of view of the original identity of the thing and the sign, of the possibility of the thing in itself. In this philosophy, which has effectively shaped the Western ontological and metaphysical tradition, imitation was already the area of the sign to which the thing in itself was banished. At the same time, however, the central line of thinking is here somehow optimistic because it holds that the period of ostracization will be over, and the thing will be returned to the original, signless plenitude. Mimesis is, then, by definition depicted as a text of the epic exploits of the thing in itself on her way back to the source; mimesis is a semiotic Odyssey of the thing struggling towards the native Itaca. The subversive myth underlying mimesis is a story of Logos as the original unity, *telos*, *arche*, which is to enable us to look at the institution of the sign, of difference, i.e. of the mark, (im) print, OUTLINE, as a temporary stage to be removed either in the future, or to be nostalgically looked back to as the myth of the golden age. In terms of language such a unity would imply a cohesion of the phonetic substance and the signified sense, would dream of turning a phoneme into a living gesture of thought. As Jacques Derrida notices:

The science of linguistics determines language [...] in the last instance [...] as the unity of the *phonè*, the *glossa*, and the *logos* [...] it would have to be admitted that the immediate and privileged unity which founds significance and the acts of language is the articulated unity of sound and sense within the phonie. With regard to this unity, writing would always be derivative, accidental, particular, exterior, doubling the signifier: phonetic. "Sign of a sign", said Aristotle, Rousseau, and Hegel.³⁷

Since art is a particularly strong concentration of imitativeness Plato condemns it in *Republic* as both untrue and injurious. This complaint, however, against the situation in which an object becomes "a sign of a sign", the complaint against writing, against what Blake called "indeli-

ble line", is performed under the aegis of speech, of voice. It is voice which traditionally represents God and God's intervention in the world, is voice which we perceive written only **within** our soul, it is the **inner, good, writing** (Reynolds's "collective observation") we were hinting at before. In other words, it is the natural writing, a script of God who, speaking to us, engraves his message **in** and **on** our heart. Hence, the idea of "good writing" in a specific combination of speaking and writing expresses a unique liaison of the divine voice made permanent in human characters. "Good writing" can be defined as a possibility of a translation of God's voice into the human graphics; thus, it becomes a combination of "pneumology" (God's breath, divine principle, *arche* of the universe as in Diogenes of Apollonia or Theophrastus) and "graphology" (human writing).

Hence, Blake torn between the traditional doctrine of writing as a necessary evil and intuition of the ontological necessity of writing, claims, on the one hand, that God is "the Presence Divine" and "the breath Divine" (*EG. K.*, 754), but also maintains that God writes upon human heart "with Iron pen" (*EG. K.*, 750). Thus, "natural writing is immediately united to the voice and the breath."³⁸ A difference between the two types of writing would be constituted mainly by the presence which characterizes the good writing and absence typical of the bad one. The bad writing refers basically to the past, is inherently connected with the absence of the addressee, and thus is fundamentally **mnemonic**; it can only remember and replace the living memory with a dead letter. The good script has nothing to do with memory, as it announces God's presence, what is more, it is God's presence. Since it has been so strongly interiorized, both by man and God, it is no longer a "Sign of a sign", a double absence, but becomes so profoundly associated with the voice, presence of God that it is only very slightly removed from the origin, if not becomes the origin itself. The distinction between the two kinds of writing must have been felt very acutely by Blake since he juxtaposes them in the immediate context:

He spoke with authority, not like a Scribe.
Upon his heart with Iron pen
He wrote, "Ye must be born again". (*EG. K.*, 750)

One can very distinctly see how distant the bad writing of a "Scribe" is from the good writing of God which is deeply internalized ("Upon his heart") and markedly and undoubtedly associated with speech and voice ("He spoke"). The good writing is, then, the voice of God which has become a divine **engraving** upon the soul.

In other words, God's writing defies imitation, is mimesis-free, is not a copy but the embodiment of voice, is not mnemonic but living. If

a philosopher claims that "a repetition of written symbols is clearly an imitation of the repetition of the word-sounds which preceded their "reduction" to writing"³⁹, then good writing is neither "reduction" nor "imitation", but the original presence of the "breath Divine". Using Plato's terminology from *Cratylus* we could conclude that in good writing God appears as an ideal "name giver", semiotic legislator (*nomothetes*) who imposes, introduces, invents, original names which, therefore, are free of their doubly mimetic character and function as an ideal model for the human language (God's writing on the human soul is basically a model, a pattern of morally beneficial behaviour to be followed by man).

As we have been trying to demonstrate, the problem of copying and mimesis is ineradicably connected with the problematic of writing, as it reinstates and discusses the uneasy relationship between a copy and an original, a sign and a thing, a signifier and a signified. Blake follows Plato's argument till the moment in which its derogatory phillipic against imitation prepares ground for the condemnation of arts. Copying is not a misfortune in Blake's philosophy but a voluntary acceptance of the fact that imitation, mimesis, is the element of man in which endless repetition of the Same is the only possibility of meaning and communication. It is not incidental that meaning finds itself in an adjacent position to communication, since in Blake's theory imitation is inextricably allied with language. In *Annotations to Reynolds* we read:

To learn the Language of Art, "Copy for ever" is My Rule (K, 446).

If he Reynolds means That Copying Correctly is a hindrance, he is a Liar, for that is the only School to the Language of Art. (K, 448).

The language of art is a proliferation of the Same. This is when the ways of Blake and Plato part: while Plato considers such a situation a major drawback and a hindrance to meaning, Blake understood it as the recognition of the fact that a tentative original eventually emerges at the end of a long line of copies. The movement of signifiers in art is centrifugal, i.e. it takes us further and further away from the center, from the place where the first signifier was (nearly) identical with the transcendental signified. This movement can be represented by the consecutive stages of the process which starts with the idea of an object conceived of by the "Divine craftsman", then is followed by a natural product "spontaneous" replica of the idea which in turn, is reflected, imitated by the human sign representing the object and, in case of visual arts, is the person who copies the object, makes an imitation of the imitation. If we used a tree as an example the whole process could be represented by the following gradation:

TREE (the idea of a tree) — a tree (a natural object) — "a tree"

(a human copy of the object, eg. a picture or engraving) — "»a tree«" (a copy of the copy, as when a painter paints a picture after another picture).

Two moments are important in Blake's doctrine of mimesis: one is an apparent secondariness of copying, of a minute re-creation of the object the result of which is another version of the Same, two images of the Same without a difference; the other opens a question of criticism. When Rynolds writes in his treatise:

[...] it is not to be understood, that I advise any endavour to copy the exact peculiar colour and complexion of another man's mind [...]. His model may be excellent but the copy will be ridiculous (K, 471),

Blake poignantly asks "Why then Imitate at all?" (K, 471).

Mimesis, a dissemination of signifiers, proliferation of the Same, writing (all are names of the same thing, as in language there can be no name which would not refer to another name) is a loyal repetition of the object copied. As such it seems to open a gap between copying and criticism which is exactly a process of distancing oneself from an object, of looking upon an object from a point of view which lies outside the chain of signifiers. Criticism traditionally opposes mimesis, since what is "imitative" is also of a "secondary" importance and, as such is inferior to what is "original". Criticism then is the quest for originality and must be at odds with the mimetic production. It seems paradoxical that Blake, who draws a line between the critical and imitative faculty, identifies the two procedures in his famous assertion "Imitation is Criticism" (K, 453).

In *Public Address*, however, we can also read a comment which undermines nearly everything we have said so far about mimesis and imitation. Complaining of the situation of the nineteenth century English art Blake categorically states his dislike for imitation: "To Imitate I abhor" (K, 600). We can detect in Blake at least three groups of statements with regard to mimesis:

1) the absolute adherence to imitation as a mode of production ("to copy the exact colour and complexion of another man") and the belief in imitation as a mode of communication (it is the best way "to learn the Language of Art");

2) a view according to which imitation is not only a copy, but also an excess of production, a particular style of producing an imitation which turns it inevitably into a comment upon the object copied; mimesis as information which is a function of the disturbance of the order of the object imitated ("Imitation is Criticism");

3) a tendency towards considering imitation as a scandalous betrayal of the individual, an excess of loyalty and thus slavery; imitation as a monstrous production ("to Imitate I abhor").

Points 1) and 2) which refer, respectively to imitation as a self-repeating production and instructive production are monitored by the notion of truth. In 1) imitation has to fulfil its basic function which is to be the same as the object imitated, to be **homological** with it; in 2) the function of imitation is to demonstrate, against the general similarity, differences separating it from the imitated; an imitation is a compound object which consists of elements identical with, but also divergent from, the copied object, and thus it remains in the **isological** relation with it.

The homology of 1) and isology of 2) are shadowed by two different aspects of the concept of truth. In 1) the criterion of truth is a degree to which a copy agrees, matches, responds, in all the details to the call of the object imitated. The truth in this relationship reveals the object as we know it, in the totality of its shapes, and this unveiling of the object is achieved by the analogous construct, identical being, according to the ancient rule "like is known by like". Hence, as we read in Empedocles "we see earth with earth, water with water."⁴⁰ The truth of 1) is a truth of *homoiosis*, of likeness similarity, and agreement.

In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* we find an adage which is a rendition of Empedocles's dictum of the homology between the image and the thing: "The eyes of fire, the nostrils of air, the mouth of water, the beard of earth"(K,152). Also Blake's epistemology is founded upon the relation of homology between the knower and the known. The perceiver can recognize the object as another "I", thus the act of perception is, originally, the act of self-perpetuation. The object is recognized to the degree to which I recognize myself in it. Thus,

A Fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees (MHH. K, 151).

As a Man is, so He Sees (Let. K, 793).

It has to be noticed that the relationship between the image and the thing is more complicated than it seems, since a copy, on the one hand, disguises, masks, the thing by introducing itself between the knower and the thing but on the other hand, it also uncovers it, as it enables us to recognize the thing, makes us aware that a loyal, finished replica has the value of the thing itself. Truth as *homoiosis* covers and uncovers the thing, but its foundation is a relationship of agreement between the image and the thing imitated. The knower knows that he has to do with a copy and the object copied at the same time; the nature of agreement is anchored in the interplay of masking and unmasking of the thing, although in both cases, in what we see and in what we do not see, it is only a repetition of the Same. We could say in the Heideggerian way that which is revealed, and that which is hidden are identical. Jacques Derrida in his essay on Mallarmé takes into account such a truth, and from its point of view describes a good imitation as the one which

[...] will be [...] true, faithful, like or likely, adequate, in conformity with the *physis* (essence or life) of what is imitated [...].⁴¹

This again brings us unexpectedly back to Reynolds. Blake's aesthetic adversary (although a careful study would show him much less of an antagonist than Blake wished him to be) in his effort to adjust classisistic doctrines to preromantic demands tried to curb students's imitating passion (although Blake characteristically overemphasized this aspect of his thought), but, on the other hand, he saw a "right mode of imitation"⁴² as a necessary part of artist's vocation. In Discourse XIII he quotes Plato's judgment and prescribes for arts a specific type of imitation:

When such a man as Plato speaks of Painting as only an imitative art [...] I think he misleads us by a partial theory. For this reason I shall beg leave to lay before you a few thoughts on this subject; to throw out some hints that may lead your minds to an opinion, (which I take to be the truth) that Painting is not only to be considered as an imitation, operating by deception, but that it is, and ought to be, in many points of view, and strictly speaking, no imitation at all of external nature. (R, 232).

In other words, Reynolds is profoundly aware of the difference between imitation "by deception", ie. "of external nature", and imitation which in the quoted passage, remains ambiguously described in negative terms. Imitation in this theory is far from a mere reproduction of the external similarity, does not vulgarly expose itself to the eye, but remains hidden. It is precisely this hiddenness that constitutes the very essence of art:

Art in its perfection is not ostentatious; it lies hid, and works its effect, itself unseen.(R, 101).

Imitation, if it is to keep its important position in the aesthetic experience and history of arts has to be interpreted, paradoxically, as residing not in the external, superficial homology between a real object and an image, but in the intricate network of relationships within a work itself. Thus, it is not a question of the easy "admiration and relishing" but a painstaking analysis:

Thus the highest beauty of form must be taken from nature; but it is an art of long deduction, and great experience, to know how to find it. We must not content ourselves with merely admiring and relishing; we must enter into the principles on which the work is wrought: these do not swim on the superficies, and consequently are not open to superficial observers. (R, 101).

We can see, then, that Reynolds was aware of the vulgar oversimplification which identified a truth of imitation with a truth of a superficial homology.

The other truth, the truth of 2) supports the importance of the masking/unmasking game between the copy and the copied (this is a point where Derrida seems to disregard the potential of his own theory; by drawing a dichotomy between truth as agreement and truth as unveiling which lies at the foundation of any signification he lets pass unnoticed this play of veiling and unveiling according to which even the concept of truth as homology would reveal that dangerous interplay of nakedness and clothes, hiding and disclosing, etc.), but leaves out the element of agreement. The knower perceives the thing not as similar or the same but, first of all, as an active element in the process of perception. The truth of 2) is dynamic, i.e. it is based not so much on a closed circuit current of recognition operating between the knower and the known, but it presents the thing as it is, with a sudden potential opening, fracture which can show its anchorage in the plenitude of Being. Thus, to use Blake's terminology, the truth of 1) is local and temporal, while the truth of 2) is omnipresent and eternal. This is a truth as revealed in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*:

How do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy way,
Is an immense world of delight, clos'd by your senses five? (K, 150).
When thou seest an Eagle, thou seest a portion of Genius; lift up thy Head!
(K, 152)
If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man
as it is, infinite. (K, 154).

The description like "immense", "Genius", "infinite" in conjunction with a fundamental qualification "as it is" show convincingly enough that Blake's philosophy of perception and imitation as understood in 2) is commanded by the concept of truth as the revelation which is also pregnant with the moment of hiding and veiling: a thing displays itself only after it was covered, protected, sheltered, by our routine perception, it explodes into eternity in a moment of rejection of its shape secured by the truth as homology. The truth of a thing, the thing "as it is", result from the interplay of masking and unmasking, the procedure which, deprived of the limiting criterion of agreement, reveals a thing as a pulsation, oscillation, between the finitude of its shape and infinity of its essence. The infinity of a thing is veiled by the perception of "polluted" senses, and the veil separating a thing from infinity is the line which hinders our senses and, at the same time, shrinks objects and makes them immovable. The veil or the line are the meeting places of the outside and inside, finitude and infinity. That is why a movement towards the thing itself is conditioned by a movement toward the man himself, combined in the act of "cleansing the doors of perception". This is an operation which, like the event of a line, has a medicinal value. The truth of imitation in 2) is determined by the removal of residues of illness, of misperception,

from the organism, and thus has both a purificatory and purgative effect. It purifies the soul (as in Plato *Iamblichus*), the body (as in ancient medicine applying homeopathic principle), and the mind (as in Plato's *Sophist* where it is described as cleansing our souls of false opinions). The interplay of what is hidden and what is revealed, of finitude and infinity is another version of *pharmakon* which unites in itself qualities of a medicine (it reveals, cleanses) and a poison (it hides, pollutes, brings about a disease). The game of the veil and the body constitutes the truth of 2) as *alētheia*.

9. Appearance and Appearing

The secret is there is no secret.

I cannot wake you up. You can wake you up.

I cannot cure you. You can cure you.

— John Lennon, *The Playboy Interview*

Two verbs are necessary to bring to light the meaning of this Greek term *alētheia* which Heidegger has reinterpreted in his works; both verbs are present in Blake's famous quotation about the doors of perception. One of them is to "appear", the other to "be" the verb round which evolves Heidegger's "fundamental question". To "appear" and to "be" play in Blake's adage a role of the mirror reflection: after the doors of perception are cleansed a thing **"appears as it is"**. We should also note that the act of seeing does not determine once and for all the thing perceived. The thing "appears as it is" that is to say, it exposes itself to our vision but not to our action or intrusion. The thing "as it is" reveals itself to us in its Being, and our purified perception can be adjusted so as to notice the "infinity" of the thing. Human action is necessary to **make perception possible but not to make the thing possible**, as the thing in its is-ness suddenly "appears" in front of us. The thing "appears" suddenly, i.e. becomes unconcealed, unveiled, uncovered in its Being (as it is), but also from, out of its Being (the suffix un- is the grammatical index of this movement).

This concept of truth as uncovering, unconcealing is meticulously explored by Heidegger. Describing *alētheia* in *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger gives us the following definition:

To say that an assertion "is true" signifies that it uncovers the entity as it is in itself. Such an assertion asserts, points out, "lets" the entity be seen in its uncoveredness.⁴³

One could hermeneutically identify the two texts separated by a hundred years: Heidegger and Blake both speak of the thing unconcealed in its Being ("the entity as it is in itself"), and both underscore the independent character of this occurrence. Heidegger thoroughly stresses the thing's submission to the act of perception, as the truth as unconcealment (*alētheia*) only points out the thing, "lets" it be seen; Blake characteristically, refrains from using the verb "see" in his assertion, and talks about the thing appearing to man. In other words, having read Blake through Heidegger's script, having studied Heidegger's *errata* to Blake's text, we can assert that there exists a basic identity of the verbs to "be", to "let", and to "appear", since to "appear" means to "let itself be seen" and this, in turn, is the unconcealment of the fundamental verb to "be" as manifested in the thing. The main difficulty lies here in the supposition that appearing may also mean (and does also mean) appearance, a semblance, an external surface of the object. Thus, there is a possibility of reading the truth as unconcealment also as an untruth of concealment, appearing as appearance, Being as a mere sign of Being etc. This is a danger which Heidegger notices in a copious commentary on the word *alētheia* in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Having defined *alētheia* as the place where the object suddenly stands in its truth ("Since the essent as such is, it places itself in and stands in *unconcealment*, *alētheia*"⁴⁴), he describes the very act of being disclosed by the noun *Schein* which, according to Heidegger, can be used in at least three senses:

- 1) *Schein* as radiance and glow; 2) *Schein* and *Scheinen* as appearing, coming to light; 3) *Schein* as mere appearance or semblance (*Anschein*).⁴⁵

A Heideggerian reading of Blake would maintain that the distance between the first two meanings of *Schein* and the third one is the territory where the process of "cleansing the doors of perception" takes place, since it is with the purified vision, with the "inward eye" that we manage to see through the appearance of a thing into the thing "as it is". One should, however, be constantly aware of the danger of reading the third meaning of *Schein* as a scandalous monstrosity of epistemology, as a pure and negative obstacle on our way to knowledge. The movement between *Schein* 1 and *Schein* 2 is, as a matter of fact, a movement between the truth and untruth which is the essence of *alētheia*. In *alētheia*, in the place where things stand in themselves, appear as they are, a revelation of truth is followed inexorably by a concealment of truth. The very moment the truth is uncovered and shines in the darkness of Being (in this sense *alētheia* is the "clearing of Being", the place which is this sudden opening where Being is brought to light), it is seen, subjected to our vision thus becoming an acoustic or visual sign, and hence it acquires its looks, its semblance, its appearance in the very moment when it loses it.

This interplay of **appearance** and **appearing** is absolutely necessary, since otherwise a man would not be able to come to contact with Being which makes itself manifest in its appearances, i.e. material forms. According to Heidegger and Blake, the unfathomable depth of Being must have a **face**, a **sur-face**, a *façade*, without which Being would be deprived, dis-inherited from the very chance of disclosing, of unconcealment, i.e. bereft of the possibility of truth. In other words, there can be no *Schein* 2 without *Schein* 3, as it is *Schein* 2 which brings *Schein* 3 to the light of *Schein* 1, but without *Schein* 3 there would be nothing radiance could unconceal in darkness. Thus, the comment about the dangerous vicinity of semblances and essences is accompanied by a further significant remark:

[...] it becomes clear that the second variety of *Scheinen* appearing in the sense of showing itself, pertains both to *Schein* as radiance to *Schein* as semblance, and not as a fortuitous attribute, but as the ground of their possibility. The essence of appearance (*Schein*) lies in the appearing (*Erscheinen*).⁴⁶

From this Heideggerian perspective Blake's postulate of cleansing the doors of perception becomes interpretable as a translation of appearance into appearing, as bringing to light of the surface, of the material shape of a thing. Thus, the depth does not question or erase the surface but together with it stands in the light of Being. Truth as *alêtheia* is, then, the epistemological replica of the movement of the "pen of gold" in engraving: both disclose the depth hidden under the front, but both recognize the importance of the surface, since it is the surface that constitutes the only level upon which the depth of Being can be revealed. Thus, the interplay between a necessary appearance and unconcealed appearing is a frequent subject of those passages in Blake which deal with his theory of vision. From a concise formula

Eternity is in love with the productions of time (MHH. K, 151)

which in the Heideggerian terms would read as "appearing is in love with appearance", we move to a more complex assertion from *A Vision of the Last Judgment*:

I assert for My Self that I do not behold the outward Creation & that to me it is hindrance & not Action; it is as the Dirt upon my Feet, No part of Me. "What", it will be questioned, "When the Sun rises, do you not see a round disc of fire somewhat like a Guinea? O no, no, I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying "Holy, Holy, Holy it the Lord God Almighty". K, 617).

The latter of the fragments is of particular importance, since it demonstrates a typical Blake's predicament — the difficulty of accepting a cen-

terless pulsation of signs without nostalgically looking towards a frozen island of security established by a strict dychotomic division into the "idea" and its "shadow", the real and the illusory. Thus, we have an obvious contrast between two orders of appearing: one describing the surface of an object, and the other pertaining to the Being disclosed in the act of perception. It is relevant to notice that while the first movement is circumscribed within the scheme of outside and inside, the other overcomes this division. Thus, in the order of appearing as appearance, the front, the facade of an object is evicted outside the perceiver, it is "as the Dirt upon My Feet". The knower and the known do not belong together (Heidegger's *Zusammengehören*) but stand in two different orders.

The change in the order of appearing is striking as coming to light or radiance: a thing is not an entity that I confront or even collide with. is not a being in my way ("The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the eyes of others only a green thing that stands in the way", *Let. K*, 793), but a being I-am-on-the-way-with. In this perspective a thing and a viewer stand together, belong together, and find themselves disclosed, unconcealed in Being. Blake's rejection of the "outward Creation" suggests one continuity of the world in which I and the thing belong together, in which I and the thing stand in the radiant light of Being, disclosed in the movement of *alētheia*, and hidden, masked, veiled by the very observation, the very awareness of being disclosed and unmasked. The sun described as the "Innumerable company of the heavenly host", as the order of appearing, points out the continuity of Being defying the division into outside and inside;

To Me This World is all One continued Vision of Fancy or Imagination, & I feel flatter'd when I am told so (*Let. K*, 793).

The two orders of appearing are also involved in a network of spatial relationships. While appearing as a semblance is represented as limited and restricted, the other appearing brings about a sudden opening of space which becomes unmeasurable and infinite. *Alētheia* is an engraving which does not imitate objects on a flat surface but by opening, cutting, deflowering a surface, it opens up the infinity of the depth. **Engraving, that painful incision upon the virginal space, a beautiful facade, a movement in which a pen unnoticeably becomes a knife**, in the very act of looking not so much at but **through** the front, brings to light the Being of the thing (a copper plate) in which the surface belongs together with the depth. The space in the appearing as unconcealment is not remembered, recollected in a moment of tranquillity ("But Albion fell down [...] hurl'd by own Spectre, who is the Reasoning Power in every Man, into his own Chaos, which is the Memory between Man & Man", *Jer. K*, 685; "Imagination has nothing to do with Memory", *Ann. Wordsw. K*, 783), but

conquered in the moment of sudden light on the clearing of Being. Heidegger juxtaposes these two orders of appearing in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*:

Appearing means first: that which gathers itself, which brings-itself-to-stand in its togetherness and so stands. But second it means: that which, already standing there, presents a front, a surface, offers an appearance to be looked at.⁴⁷

The process of cleansing the doors of perception does not do anything else but lets us see the appearing of the thing in the first sense, by looking through the appearing of the thing as used in the latter meaning. This is entangled in a movement from a finite, restricted space to the infinity produced by the thing which "brings-itself-to-stand". Such a movement is traceable in Blake's philosophy, and Heidegger again provides us with a pertinent comment:

[...] the difference between appearing and appearing is this: appearing in the first and authentic sense as bringing-itself-to-stand in togetherness involves space, which it first conquers; as it stands there, it creates space for itself; it produces space and everything pertaining to it; it is not copied. Appearing in the second sense emerges from an already finished space; it is situated in the rigid measures of this space, and we see it by looking toward it. The vision makes the thing. Now this vision becomes decisive instead of the thing itself. Appearing in first sense opens up space. Appearing in the second sense merely circumscribes and measures the space that has already been opened.⁴⁸

Appearing in the first sense, the appearance we perceive with the "cleansed doors or perception" is then a letting a thing be "as it is", in short it is what Heidegger and Meister Eckhart speak of as *Gelassenheit*. *Gelassenheit*, a letting be, signifies a dynamic emergence of a thing, its energetic movement towards and coming into the clearing of Being, its spinning out of and revealing of Being from which it is not separated, but which it uncovers in the dialectic of veiling and unveiling. A thing, then, resides in and with Being, and only brings itself to the fore, lets itself be seen against the sky of Being like Heidegger's temple. In his essay *Was Ist Metaphysik* Heidegger defines a being of each individual essent as fundamentally "ek-static", i.e. according to his etymology as a being which "is standing out (*aus-stehen*) in the truth of Being, a standing open to the Open itself."⁴⁹ This dynamism of the process of *alētheia* is again well caught by Heidegger who makes it one of the main characteristic features of the original meaning of *Logos* as *legen*, as primordial "collectedness" (*Sammlung*),⁵⁰ primal act of anchoring, rooting of all things in Being, and of bringing them together in consideration (*zusammen-Vorliegen-bringen*).⁵¹

Legein or *logos* are the letting-lie-forward (*vorliegen lassen*) of the thing which comes to presence in its presence.⁵²

When Heidegger speaks of "bringing to light", "letting lie", or "coming to stand" the stress is placed on the dynamic quality of the verb rather than on the final, seemingly static, result. What, in Heidegger's diagnosis, is the essence of the dramatic change in the history of European thinking — a misinterpretation of the concept of *Logos* so that it came to a law imposed rationally on the process of living and, finally, declined to be a mere synonym of logic, has been a significant element of Blake's theory. Although, as David Erdman points out, much of Blake's attack against the externally imposed rules goes against the political and social institutions of the time, nevertheless Blake always understands these manifestations of tyranny "backwards", i.e. tries to trace them back to their roots which he sees in the inauthentic mode of being of the human mind. Thus, in *Songs of Experience* we read that "the dysmal shade" of the tree of "the Human Abstract" grows in "the Human Brain" (*The Human Abstract*), and the restraints imposed upon a man are "the mind-forged manacles" (*London*). Letting be of a thing is a primal and fundamental human need within the sphere of existence, it is the assumption which brings to light, uncovers an essent.

The landscape of *Songs of Experience*, which is a landscape where things do not stand out, do not exist **ek-statically** or **ecstatically**, is dominated by darkness and gloom where "the sun does never shine" (*Holy Thursday*), and the tiger which burns in "the forests of the night" obviously belongs to the forest which is deprived of a *Lichtung*, of the clearing of Being. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* a letting be of a thing is translated into the language of the dialectic of mind and passion, where passion represents the **ek-static**, **ecstatic** existence, a life which "stands out" of and in Being. Hence, the aphoristic "Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires" (K, 152) is theoretically supported by the belief that "Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained; and the restrainer or reason usurps its place & governs the unwilling" (K, 149). Restraints are viewed as encroachments upon a letting be of a thing, a man, and are negations of energy and dynamism:

And being restrain'd, it by degrees becomes passive, till it is only the shadow of desire. (K, 150).

10. The Road of Excess

I am not mad. What interests me
is a lot of freedom.

— Jim Morrison, *An Interview*

A movement of signifiers in Blake is either towards too little or too much. Passion is an umbrella term for a radical imbalance of life which precludes the possibility of stating one's actual unity with Being. The very moment one formulates a statement expressive of such a unity, he at the same time blurs and veils the truth that was intended to be revealed. Truth is uncovered in the act of seeing, in the infinity of Being which is not external to the perceiver but which enfolds him, gathers, collects, reads him into the primal collectedness of Being (*Versammlung*). The Being, a thing stands ek-statically and ecstatically out of, is the Being I am enwrapped in, enwombed in; but, simultaneously, the truth is veiled, and the unity of collectedness is broken by the act of naming, by the use of sign which, by the very procedure of pointing out, introduces a painful rupture, an unhealed wound, into the process of living. This trap in which Blake's thought is inevitably to be ensnared is also discovered by Derrida in Heidegger. This is the predicament which the author of *De la grammatologie* diagnoses in his text:

The voice of the sources is not heard. A rupture between the originary meaning of Being and the word, between meaning and the voice, between "the voice of being" and the *phonè*, between "the call of being" and articulated sound; such a rupture, which at once confirms a fundamental metaphor, and renders it suspect by accentuating its metaphoric discrepancy, translates the ambiguity of the Heideggerian situation with respect to the metaphysics of presence and logocentrism. It is at once contained within in and transgresses it.⁵³

The silence of the spring of truth is already disturbed by the sound of the stream of signs. When the statement claims and propounds a union of myself and Being, the rupture introduced by such a claim changes myself into Blake's "Selfhood" and scatters the collectedness of Being into a dispersion of beings. This dispersion is the origin of language, the fundamentally gap-oriented process. Language is a mediation between two dispersed individuals, and thus inevitably is doomed to passivity, since when deprived of the immediacy of the bodily contact, of the "nearness" of the original togetherness, it has to evolve towards more and more passive stance. Derrida notices a similar passage in Rousseau's essay *On the Origin of Languages* in which the French philosopher maintains that:

[...] vision and hearing are the only passive organs of language among distinct [*dispersés*] individuals,

and it is precisely this citation which gives Derrida a momentum towards his final, categorical assertion:

Language could have emerged only out of dispersion,

to be followed in a typically Derridian manner by a transformation of this statement of fact in a statement of the essence of language:

This dispersion should no doubt be overcome by language but, for that very reason, it determines the natural condition of language.⁵⁴

This split, a never healed wound, in the very structure of language is then associated with the difference between Selfhood and togetherness of Being, but also is accompanied by other phenomena: the emergence of memory (with the first statement, the first articulation, there appears something to re-create), the appearance of binary pairs of negations (good and evil, body and soul), the duality of thought and feeling, of the sign and its object. This is a complaint of Milton in Blake's text:

"What do I here before the Judgment? without my Emanation?
With the daughters of memory & not with the daughters of inspiration?
I in my Selfhood am that Satan: I am that Evil One!
He is my Spectre! in my obedience to loose him from my Hells,
To claim the Hells, my Furnaces, I go to Eternal Death".
Then on the verge of Beulah he beheld his own Shadow,
A mournful form double, hermaphroditic, male & female
In one wonderful body; and he enter'd into it
In direful pain, for the dread of shadow twenty-seven fold
Reach'd to the depths of direst Hell & thence to Albion's land,
Which is this earth of vegetation on which now I write. (M. K, 496).

As we have already noticed, the question of being in Blake (Heidegger's *Seinsfrage*) can never be expressed directly, since the very word "ex-press" connotes a distance, a detachment, a separation from the area to which we want to be originally loyal. A desire, when suppressed becomes "a shadow of desire", or when ex-pressed, lived out, or acted inevitable turns in "Too much".

For Blake, the road towards truth is a road of a dangerous surplus, of that dangerous supplement Rousseau was speaking of in his *Confessions*, and which Derrida expanded and turned into a model of writing as a mode of existence. Truth is a question of not being able to recognize the moment of absolute coincidence and identity between a sign and an object, between *Logos* as the original, in-articulate, silent, belonging together and *Logos* as logic, reason, the Word. First of all, truth is a *road*, and not a destination point; since language is a product of separation, dispersion which it itself conditions, truth can only be approximated as a revelation, an **unconcealment** of a view that appears suddenly at the bend of a mountain road, or the Heideggerian country path (*Feldweg*, *Holzwege*), only to be replaced by another view which does not erase or invalidate the previous moment of ecstatic (and *ek-static*) consummation, but replaces, supplements it, takes off of its predecessor, steals our rap-

ture from it and, by the very act of what Blake calls in *Jerusalem* a "secret amorous theft" (K, 707), leads us on the road which is nothing but a **detour**.

The **road** and **theft** are related to each other by the impossibility of habitation and ownership which is inscribed in them. The road excludes both and, by the emphasis on a constant movement unrestricted by any destination points, it precludes internalization of experience, cancels the idea of ownership, defies the appropriation of something as "mine". Also in "stealing" there lurks the necessity of running, escaping, flying. The road and theft belong to the sphere of the uncanny, *Unheimlich*, of "floating" between truth and un-truth, "sailing" between texts. This is summarized in a hesitation between the "veil" [*voile*], the "flight" [*vol*], and the "leap" [*voltige*] Derrida traces in Mallarmé.⁵⁵ Both the road and theft defy the overtly masculine concept of domination and manipulation, thus leaving for the artist the Mallarmean/Derridian sexless mask of a mime, existential clown. Hélène Cixous speaks of it in the following way:

Let's leave it [traditional academic concepts of objectivity and subjectivity] to the warriors, to masculine anxiety and its obsession with how to dominate the way things work [...]. For us the point is not to take possession in order to internalize or manipulate, but rather to dash through and to "fly" [*voler* — fly/steal].⁵⁶

Derrida notices that, in terms of critical practice, it implies a somewhat anarchic situation where the interpreter/clown/thief finds himself in a position of the total, yet uneasy freedom inscribed in all the necessary limitations of writing as the movement of signifiers. Hence,

The Mime imitates nothing [...] there is nothing prior to the writing of his gestures. Nothing is prescribed for him. No present has preceded or supervised the tracing of his writing... The Mime is not subjected to the authority of any book: the fact that Mallarmé points this out is all the more strange since the text called *Mimique* is initially a reaction to a reading.⁵⁷

According to Heidegger, the very word "road" seems to be

[...] an ancient primary word that speaks to the reflective mind of men. The key word in Lao-tse's poetic thinking is Tao, which "properly speaking" means "way".⁵⁸

The road as truth, truth as the road, is labyrinthine and far from a smooth pavement of a city street. It is the excess, supplement, and replacement which constitutes this track determining the radical inability to establish a straightforward, one way, relationship between a starting point and a destination, between a signifier and a signified. Such a road is the

"indelible line" written with a "golden pen" Blake was talking about in *Jerusalem*; the road of excess is the road of WRITING. Hence, in Blake's philosophy:

The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom (MHH. K, 150),

but the destination is only a shadow, an intuition of a destination that awaits us at the end of the route straightened out by the improvements, short-cuts of speech:

Improvements make strait roads; but the crooked roads without Improvements are roads of Genius. (MHH. K, 152).

Writing leads us out of the city with its geometrical pattern of straight streets administered by the logic of *Logos* as reason and brings us to the winding paths of the countryside. What we lose in this very act of transition is one, central, panoramic vision which perspectively places an object at the end of the straight line connecting it with our eye, and instead we are lost in a multiplicity of views which open round every corner of a "crooked" path.

In his comments upon Plato's *Phaedrus* Derrida draws our attention to the unexpected geographical change of Socrates's likings brought about by books, i.e. by writing. Socrates attracted by the perspective of getting acquainted with a widely-acclaimed book by Lysis leaves the city, his native element, accompanied by Phaedrus:

The biblia that will draw Socrates out of his reserve and out of the space in which he is wont to learn, to teach, to speak, to dialogue — the sheltered enclosure of the city — these biblia contain a text written by "the ablest writer of our day".⁵⁹

Mr. and Mrs. Blake emphasize the rejuvenating, soothing, influence of the countryside in the language of opposition between the incessant flowering of the province and the barren character of the city. Thus, in her letter to Mrs. Flaxman (dated Sept. 14, 1800) Mrs. Blake speaks about "the terrible desert of London" (K, 800), and Blake distances himself from this place with an empty, disdainful silence:

[...] it will be Thursday before we can get away from this — City. (K, 801).

In another letter Blake would describe Felpham, Mr. Hayley's estate in Sussex, as a sudden opening, an explosion and bursting of a shell:

Felpham is a sweet place for Study, because it is more spiritual than London. Heaven opens here on all sides her Golden Gates, her windows are not obstructed by vapours; voices of Celestial inhabitants are more distinctly

heard, & their form more distinctly seen, & my Cottage is also a Shadow of their Houses. (K, 802).

The road of excess, that dangerous supplement, the indelible line, is the road of writing, the "crooked" way of articulation which replaces one sign by another in a never-ending movement of signifiers. In Derrida's concise formula "Everything in language is substitution", and it is

[...] the power of substituting one organ for another, of articulating space and time, sight and voice [Blake's voices of Celestial inhabitants are more distinctly **heard**, and their form is more distinctly **seen** — TSJ], hand and spirit [Blake: "My Fingers Emit sparks of fire with Expectation of my future labours" (K. 801), but the fingers are "under the direction of my future labours" (K. 801), but the fingers are "under the direction of Messengers from Heaven, Daily & Nightly" (K. 812) — TSJ] it is this this faculty of supplementarity which is the true "origin" — or nonorigin — of languages: articulation in general, as articulation of nature and convention, of nature and all its others.⁶⁰

In the already quoted passage from Milton Blake stresses a deep involvement of existence in writing (Derrida: "There is no linguistic sign before writing"⁶¹), entanglement of life in the exteriority of signifiers. Thus, Milton, as any sign, undergoes a process of division which exteriorizes a part of himself called a "Shadow". This "Spectre", a messenger of "Eternal Death" is seemingly "in one wonderful body", but on close inspection it reveals a fissure, the unretrievable loss of unity hidden under the appearance of a perfect union; its form is "hermaphroditic", i.e. "double". It is interesting to observe that the form uniting the male and the female principle, thus organizing itself along the line of the utmost pleasure ("The virgin/That pines for man shall awaken her womb to enormous joys in the secret shadows of her chambers", VDA. K, 194), becomes its own negation, as it undergoes a transformation into "a mournful form". This is one of the places which betray the double bend of Blake's mind: on the one hand, he seems to accept the position of the one who is lost in the play of signifiers, and thus refrains from looking for a central point in which a signifier could finally unite and coalesce with its signified, and still he longs for the ultimate consummation. He recognizes the "indelibility" of the line, inexorable character of writing and, at the same time, in numerous places he emphasizes his lack of acceptance of such a situation.

Hence, a "double" form of writing, its radical supplementarity, will never form a *gaia scienza* for Blake; in other words, existence is evaluated as *ek-static/ecstatic*, i.e. as a process in which "man stands out towards the things in the world and the world itself."⁶² Man's existence is made meaningful in the moment of reaching out, standing out towards the world which Blake discusses in his dialectic of passion and action ("He

who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence", *MHH. K*, 151), and enhances in his concept of man as a sense giving phenomenon, that is to say, as Heidegger's "ek-sisting" man, a man standing out of the primal collectedness of Being ("Where man is not, Nature is barren", *MHH. K*, 152).

Where hides a difference is Blake's attempt at matching truth as *alētheia* and truth as *homoiōsis*, truth as hesitant uncovering, and truth as agreement. That is why, although the diagnosis of the ontological situation of man thrown into the world as dispersion, diversity, distance, and articulation, i.e. writing, is anti-Platonic, the cure, the *pharmakon*, is taken out of the pharmacy of Plato's philosophy of the privileged position of the idea with regard to the object. When acknowledging a deep entanglement of man's existence in writing Blake continues to dream of the fulfillment, of the presence, of the Voice. If this is the case, he has to display mistrust in a "double" form of writing which, like a book

[...] reproduces the *logos*, and the whole is organized by this relation of repetition, resemblance (*homoiōsis*), doubling, duplication, this sort of spectacular process and play of reflections where things (*onta*), speech, and writing come to repeat and mirror each other.⁶³

In Blake's *Annotations to Reynolds* we find a telling remark which reinscribes Blake's Platonic inclinations into the problematic of writing as an echo, a garment of soul. Reynolds quotes Carlo Maratti's opinion that a drapery was more of a challenge to the artist than the body, to which Blake replies:

I do not believe that Carlo Maratti thought so, or that any body can think so; the Drapery is formed alone by the Shape of the Naked. (*K*, 462).

The point made by Blake is of practical (painterly) and theoretical (metaphysical) significance. An analogous fragment from Flaxman's lectures instructs us how to paint in agreement with the rules of styles:

Drapery, as a medium through which the human figure is intelligible may be compared with speech, by which ideas and thought are perceived [...]. This consistency of the original image with its outward appearance is proper and decorous, and cannot be violated without inflicting the shock of absurdity and folly; for as the noblest thought would be degraded by low and unbecoming speech, so would the person of a legislator or a prophet by the dress of a buffoon or a baccanal.⁶⁴

Thus, the question of decorum is pertinent to a general discussion of spirituality which is a way to restore the fundamental nakedness of Being which shines through the clothing of time.

So far we have been trying to misread Blake through the script of Heidegger and Derrida to produce our own text as a flowering (out) of

Blake grafted upon the Derridian/Heideggerian soil, disseminating Blake's text in other and through other texts. We have performed an act of what Derrida calls a "textual grafting" resulting from the "etymological coincidence uniting the graft and the graph"⁶⁵ To "misread" a text means, at least, two things: first of all, it is to see it as a place where other texts do not end but, just the opposite, as a maternal place where all other texts start; and, secondly, it means to see this text as the area where all other texts interfere and mingle with one another. Paul de Man, in his important article on Nietzsche, defines "a good misreading" as

[...] a text that produces another text which engenders additional texts⁶⁶

and another critic would claim that

[...] literary history must be extended to include not only the series of critical misreadings of a given text, but also interrelationships among poems as they are interpretations, deconstructions, of each other.⁶⁷

When "misreading" Blake, when watching the growth of the "textual grafting", we have to notice differences between various texts it produces. Thus, Blake, like Heidegger, believes in truth as unconcealment, but betrays the Heideggerian discourse by allowing of the treatment of material objects as mere shadows, "hindrances" of ideas; the Derridian misreading would concentrate on the movement of signifiers, on language as doubling and supplement, but it would also uncover Blake's longing for the center which gives a penetrating meaning to the parts. The road of truth is "crooked" (like in Heidegger and Derrida), but still at its end there stands a "palace of wisdom" (like in Heidegger but unlike in Derrida).

Hence, the belief in the final nakedness of Being which, from its central point, conditions shapes of the material clothing; when the Derridian misreading would stress the impossibility of that nakedness, as there is always a veil of another signifier that prevents us from seeing the shining body, Blake would write in a letter to Thomas Butts:

Naked we came here, naked of Natural things, & naked we shall return; but while cloth'd with the Divine Mercy, we are richly cloth'd in Spiritual & suffer all the rest gladly. (K, 813).

Here Blake is trapped in the implacable logic of logocentrism which, drawing a careful distinction between the essential voice and the secondary gesture of the pen holding hand, refuses to see and admit that when taking such an anti-writing stance it already commits an act of writing. Talking about the secondariness of writing is also inscribed in the movement of the hand. Blake in his Platonism would hold that things are

"hindrances", shadows of ideas, i.e. they are not what they present themselves to be. Hence, it is admissible for the sun to be and not to be a sun, for a plant to confirm and negate his being as a plant. The former conjunction is exemplified by a much quoted fragment from *A Vision of the Last Judgment*, the latter by a versified letter to Thomas Butts:

With my inward Eye, 'tis an old man gey; with my outward, a Thistle across my way. (K, 817).

If, as Blake claims, we commit a mistake by identifying the inward and outward perception, then a thing is never itself (as the ontotheological tradition of life without difference would like to have it), but it can only be **less** or **more** than itself, but in this act of recognition difference is introduced into the myth of in-different life. If we admit that a thing is less or more than itself, we distance it from itself, and understand it as existing in a constant, unceasing **between** between itself and our understanding; the emphasis is switched from the "palace of wisdom" to the "crooked" path. A thing is but a trace of itself, is a writing which prevents it from attaining the plenitude of the *phonè* that pretends it has not heard of any difference. Derrida defines the theatrics of the phonocentrism as

[...] the subordination of the trace to the full presence summed up in the logos, the humbling of writing beneath a speech dreaming its plenitude, such are the gestures required by an onto-theology determining the archeological and eschatological meaning of being as presence, as parousia, as life without difference: another name for death, historical metonymy where God's name holds death in check.⁶⁸

In the same way in which phonocentrism, claiming to be real, ideational life of God, smuggles death into the world of significance, Blake unconsciously falls victim to writing when asserting its inferiority to speech, living, "Divine Presence", "Divine Breath", of the transcendental signifié called "God". If, for a miser, the sun is less than it is ("a round disc of fire like a guinea"), for the man whose eyes have "expanded" it is more than it is ("Innumerable company of Heavenly host"), thus, the sun never is what is **really** is, i.e. it is never let "appear" "as it is". In our effort to remove appearances we create another mask.

Similarly in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* a list of definitions quoted below betrays its embededness in *écriture*, as the things defined are described in terms of the concept which is external to them, and although its aim is to sanction the ultimate identity, it only introduces further distinctions. The only way to defend a thing against the invasion from the outside is to define it tautologically in its own terms. Definition of a peacock would, in a markedly Steinian fashion, read that a peacock

is a peacock, while Blake applies to it the external concept of God without being aware of the fact that God's name "holds difference in check" at the expense of being a work of difference itself. God is to signify the plenitude, the original union, but it defines an object as standing outside it. All the definitions in the *Proverbs of Hell* are contained within the dream of the living presence of speech dreamed by writing:

The pride of the peacock is the glory of God.
The lust of the goat is the bounty of God.
The wrath of the lion is the wisdom of God.
The nakedness of woman is the work of God. (K, 151).

Albrecht Fabri describes such a situation as a fundamental misunderstanding of the Western metaphysics:

In so far as to understand means to understand something as something else, to understand the rose as a rose means precisely not to understand it. And that is what the tautology accomplishes through its emphatic refusal to formulate definitions.⁶⁹

Understanding is embedded in the radical substitution, replacement, excess, since we can understand a thing only in terms of another thing, as an item in a chain of signifiers.

This brings us back to an important concept of excess which is frequently used by Blake, and which has already been discussed in this essay. "Excess" is the word in which logocentrism reveals its fold, as — on the one hand — it strives to reach the ideal ("Exuberance is Beauty", "Enough, or too much!", K, 152), but is, simultaneously, caught in the game of supplementarity. Exuberance, "too much", is only a mirror reflection of "too little", and a thing, a "between", an "enough", separating the two is irrevocably lost in this fissure.

What will always defy and baffle criticism is this effect of being a supplementary double. There is always one extra rejoinder, one recess or representation too many, which also means too few.⁷⁰

The problematic of excess meets the image of drapery in an important notion of a "fold". In *Milton* Blake tells us the poet's plunge into the Shadowy double as a story of a man lost in numerous folds, a story of a man enfolded **in** and **by** his form(s):

[...] and he enter'd into it
In direful pain, for the dread shadow of twenty-seven fold
Reach'd to the depths of direst Hell [...] (K, 496).

The idea of a fold is another version of a self-repeating structure, a "fold" is this moment of a history of an object in which it faces itself

along the line which bends it against itself. Language, i.e. literature, text, interpretation is, at the same time **enfolding**, **unfolding**, and **refolding** of a sign. It is **enfolding** because its essence lies in constituting the area where a text meets an interpreter, where a written sign is read; this territory is not only a topographical location of this event, but it itself participates in it. A text enfolds us to the degree to which it is more than just its own explanation, to the extent to which it moves into the area more profound than a fragmentary "Reason". It is enfolding because it introduces a sign into a complicated network of relationships within the original collectedness. Thus:

Knowledge is not by deduction, but Immediate by Perception or Sense at once. Christ addresses himself to the Man, not to his Reason. (*AnBerk. K*, 774).

A contrast between "Man" (which in Blake's philosophical algebra equalled "Imagination" as in "Man is All Imagination". *K*, 775) and "Reason" or "Deduction" runs parallel to the juxtaposition of *Auslegung* and *Deutung*, explanation and interpretation, which Walter Biemel discovers in Heidegger's thought:

An explanation is an attempt to work out clearly the structure of a text, its construction, its articulation, so that we may get into the text and understand it. An interpretation attempts more: [...] we wish to understand what the text [...] is really about, what it changes in our horizon of understanding, and the extent to which the text itself occasions a change in our own horizon.⁷¹

A text **enfolds** us i.e. it envelops us in an area where the horizon of Being is common for the text and myself, for the God and the mortal ("God is Man & exists in us & we in him", *B*, 775).

A text is **unfolding** because it is either „too little" or "too much", it never remains in a state of homeostasis, but is always delayed, "deferred", it spreads only to form another fold. Thus **unfolding** does not mean attaining a smooth surface, virginal, untouched space, but pertains to the situation where even the surface is seen as another "fold"; **unfolding** cannot be interpreted as a straightening out of a process of signification, as introducing a space free of folds, but rather as **un — folding**, i.e. a procedure which makes room for another fold, another signifier, postponing forever the achievement of a signified.

Finally, a text is **refolding**, as it, through creating another fold, creates another text, it always is a story of certain misreadings and their mutual interferences. Blake conveys this idea in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* where he speaks of the Bible read in its "infernal or diabolical sense" (*K*, 158), and in *The Everlasting Gospel* where the

insistence on the multiplicity of meanings is introduced already in the initial part of the text:

Socrates taught what Meletus
Loath'd as a Nation's bitterest Curse,
And Caiphas was in his own Mind
A benefactor to Mankind:
Both read the Bible day & night,
But thou read st black where I read white. (K, 748).

As we can see a "fold" is an important concept for a theory of language and here as well Blake seems to be hesitant and undecided whether a "fold" as a fundamental feature of writing ought to be recognized as an obstacle, a hindrance in a system of relationships between a signified and a signifier, or whether it ought to be celebrated as the only element in which communication is possible. On the one hand, the folds of Shadow reach to the "depths of direst Hell", but they are also connected with writing, deeply rooted in the ontology of the world. There seems to be no world outside the fold, i.e. there seems to be no world outside writing:

[...] the dread Shadow twenty-seven fold
Reach'd to the depths of direst Hell thence to Albion's land
Which is this earth of vegetation on which now I write. (K, 496).

Still, Albion is called "the earth of vegetation", i.e. of a secondary importance in Blake's hierarchy of existence, secondary to the phonic plenitude of presence from which the "Divine Voice" speaks. This "earth of vegetation" is the domain and effect of the fold, of the territory where the fold

[...] will always have been not only a replication of the tissue but also a repetition-toward-itself of the text that is a re-folding, a re-plying, a supplementary re-marking of the fold.⁷²

It is also the earth of writing. Writing is the basic mode of production in the vegetative universe, that is to say, in the universe where the spirit inexorably undergoes the process of materialization and substantivization.

Although, in majority of cases, Blake uses "vegetation" in a derogatory context, there are also many examples where his stance is less decisive and seems to be reconsidering a meaning of the term as a possible indelible link in the chain of signifiers, what is more, its loss is an irretrievable impoverishment of existence. After a radical division into the Male and the Female the point upon which Blake focuses his attention is a question of the relationship between the material and spiritual,

but a decisive rift on the social (conscious) level is accompanied by the sense of contiguity on the plane of unconscious:

The Male is a Furnace of Beryll; the Female is a golden Loom.
I behold them, and their rushing fires overwhelm my Soul
In Londons's darkness, and my tears fall day and night
Upon the Emanations of Albion's Sons; the Daughters of Albion,
Names anciently remember'd, but condemn'd as fictions
Although in every bosom they controll our Vegetative powers. (*J. K.*, 624).

At least two points call for our attention in this passage. One is the obvious tendency towards extending the distance between the material and the spiritual, i.e. between a signifier and a signified (men are "Emanations of Albion's Sons", and only as such they conceal in themselves mysterious spiritual powers represented by the "Daughters of Albion"); the other is a marked belief in the final transparency of a sign which, although delayed by a long detour of signification, will eventually reach its destination which "controls" it. In other words, Blake, recognizing entanglement of a sign in a winding road of signification which makes the distance to cover ever longer and less unequivocal, still maintains the reality of the spiritual which sanctions signs in their semiotic function: a sign may have a few more signifiers on its way towards its signified, but the very existence of a signified is never questioned. Thus, Blake uncovering, unveiling, the concealed meaning as the heart of the signification process makes his writings more prone to the Heideggerian, hermeneutic reading than to the deconstructive, Derridian message which claims that "the hermeneutic concept of **polysemy** [...] must be replaced by **dissemination**."⁷³

Although the foundation of the Western science is for Blake uncertain, if not totally false, in its rationalistic bias, nevertheless a philosophical rescue mission that Blake launches to save the structure of human cognition is not radically different from what it criticizes. Blake attacks Bacon and Voltaire for their belief in "natural causes" but, when questioning the idea of the cause itself, he only removes it one step further from its natural, material immediacy. Thus, the following statement from Blake's analysis of Bacon "There is no Such Thing as [...] a Natural Cause" (*AnB. K.*, 403) has to be qualified by a quotation from *Jerusalem* which establishes a much less radical point of view:

We who dwell on Earth can do nothing of ourselves; every thing is conducted by Spirits, no less than Digestion or Sleep (*K.*, 621).

Blake's hermeneutics does not allow for a free floating among signs and texts although it encroaches upon the tradition of rationalism with its strict logic of causes and effects. When Blake launches a smashing

attack on Bacon's principles of rationalism and empiricism, he centers on annihilating the very term "cause" trying to remove it from the philosophical rhetoric: "The word Cause is a foolish Word" (*AnnB.* K, 403). This is undertaken with a view of the ultimate spiritualization of the human being and, eventually, with his radical identification with the spiritual powers. If the word "cause" is to be eradicated, it is due to its wrong interpretation of existence as basically twofold, i.e. material and spiritual, while for Blake existence is exclusively spiritual, and the man is not even an effect of the spiritual, but only a tablet, a white page, upon which the invisible finger writes the "indelible line".

The fundamental idea of Blake's anthropological semiotics is that the man is not God's sign mainly because he points at his transcendental signified, but because he has been written, inscribed, engraved, by God and, thus, is not a human sign of God, but **God's sign of God**. The man is an element of the divine semiotics revealing its sacred mysteries upon the human ground. In Blake's concept of semiotics as a divine discipline a man is a sign of God in two complementary senses: traditionally as a **symbol**, i.e. as an arbitrary, conventional, sign which refers to its signified on the basis of a certain, more general, scheme of agreement (the theory of Genesis, God's intervention in the world which establishes a pattern of references from one, central starting point), or **indexically**, i.e. as an immediate manifestation of God's presence in the world. Whereas in the first group of signs the dominating rule is that of a **metaphor**, in the other the organizing principle is markedly **metonymic**, as a man is but an extension of God's hand, is God's writing in the world.

But writing stubbornly comes back, even though Blake insists on the phonocentric concept of the "Presence Divine" and the "Divine Breath", and although his appeal is to the God's finger to "cease to write", the process of inscribing cannot be totally eradicated. Already in the very fact that God in its divine semiotic mercy makes itself manifest to man upon human grounds introduces a theme of the fissure, a gap, a painful rupture: since language, a sign system, is born only of dispersion, then a manifestation of unity ("for they the Ancients were wholly absorbed in their Gods. I also hope the reader will be with me, wholly One in Jesus our Lord [...]", *J. K.*, 621) translated into the language of dispersion can only be expressed in terms of this scatteredness, and the unity expressed in this way is but a dissemination of further dispersion.

This vision of language as trapped in the process of signification and, simultaneously, as the endless way towards its horizon, language as struggling to express what preceded language, is also traceable in Reynold's aesthetics where it helps to point out a difference between the styles of Michael Angelo and the 18th century art. In the last dis-

course the old and retiring president of the Royal Academy speaks of "grammar" and "dictionary" as of a necessary, incompetent, replica of the original, "dead", language:

In pursuing this great Art it must be acknowledged that we labour under greater diffulties than those who were born in the age of its discovery, and whose minds from their infancy were habituated to this style [...]. We are constrained, in these later days, to have recourse to a sort of Grammar and Dictionary, as the only means of recovering a dead language [...]. The style of Michael Angelo, which I have compared to language, and which may, poetically speaking, be called the language of the Gods, now no longer exists, as it did in the fifteenth century; yet, we may in a great measure supply the deficiency [...] of not having his works so perpetually before our eyes, by having recourse to casts from his models and designs [...] to drawings or even copies of those drawings [...]. (R, 278).

We see clearly that the myth of the Golden Age both Blake and Reynolds promoted in their writings has its semiotic metaphor in the concept of language as the inevitable structure of communication: in both versions of the myth the moderns are made to recapture, recover by means of copies the "dead" original which, on closer inspection, turns out to be nothing else but another version of a copy. God's reality is also circumscribed in and through language.

God, as the highest semiotician, is then hopelessly involved in the problematic of writing, although his entanglement is, at once, more radical (he is the first writer the origin of signs), and more discreet (he can keep silent, his finger "may cease to write"). He is in a position of Mallarmé's Mime who epitomizes, for Derrida, one who, like God-writer, *Deus-scriblerus*, is outspoken and deaf at the same time, who "inaugurates [...] breaks into a white page"

It is prescribed to the Mime that he not let anything be prescribed to him but his own writing, that he not reproduce by imitation any action [...] or any speech. The Mime ought to write himself on the white page he is; he must **himself** inscribe **himself** through gestures and plays of facial expressions. At once page and quill, Pierrot is both passive and active, matter and form, the author, the means, and the raw material of his minodrama.⁷⁴

11. The Veil of Vala

Know, then, this veil is a type and a symbol, and I am bound to wear it ever, both in dark and lightness, in solitude and before the gaze of multitude. [...]. No mortal eye shall see it withdrawn. This dismal shade must separate me from the world.
— Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Minister's Black Veil*

The problematic of the multiple inscription, of a sign marked upon another sign, a **mark re-marked**, brings us again to the question of the fold and to the metaphor of the **veil**. This has already announced itself in the terminology which defined truth as "unveiling", as *alētheia*, where the truth has been revealed as a temporary unconcealment, as a momentary lifting of a veil. What is then this unspecified, mysterious something that is lifted uncovering truth but, at the same time, separating us from truth?

In Blake's prophetic writings the veil appears as "Vala's Veil", i.e. it is inherently related to Nature Vala is the goddess of, but — paradoxically — it serves the purpose of estranging the spectator from reality which, for Blake, is purely spiritual. Thus, "Vala's Veil", is an obstacle, it hides with a perverse purpose to distort and disfigure, and the concealment is here supplemented by a disguise which functions as a painful limitation of growth. The phenomenology of hiding present in the veil relies on the fact that the veil hides a thing not so much to, eventually, reveal it, but to hide it away from us. Hence, it precludes and erases the very possibility of the dialogue between two movements: towards the inside and towards the outside. In this sense, the veil is a negation of outline which, as a meeting place, constitutes a common territory of the inside and outside. Blake takes great pains to distinguish between the outline which can become a circumference and the veil which is "the Mundane Shell" or "Net":

And as Albion built his frozen Altars, Los built the Mundane Shell
In the Four Regions of Humanity, East & West & North & South,
Till Norwood & Finchley & Blackheath & Hounslow cover'd the whole Earth.
This is the Net & Veil of Vala among the Souls of the Dead. (J. K, 671).

A more detailed description of the same process is given in third chapter of *Jerusalem*:

For the Veil of Vala, which Albion cast into the Atlantic Deep
To catch the Souls of the Dead, began to Vegetate & Petrify
Around the Earth of Albion among the Roots of his Tree.
This Los formed into the Gates mighty Wall between the Oak
Of weeping & the Palm of Suffering beneath Mundane Shell,
The habitation of the Spectres of the Dead, & the Place
Of Redemption & of awakening again into Eternity. (K, 691).

The dialectic of the veil consists in a movement from the sense of freedom to the sense of the loss of freedom, where there is a clear nostalgia for both the past ("awakening **again**") and the future ("awakening **again**"). The veil is the interval between these two stages, between **awakening** and **again**, a necessary caesura between a mark and its repetition. In other words, the veil constitutes the edge of **now** along which the

material is folded facing itself in the movement of repetition, reinscription. To put it concisely, the veil is the nostalgia for the past reanacted in the future.

Nevertheless, the veil/fold is not free of a fundamental ambiguity: on the one hand, it is limited and associated with death (it is used "to catch the Souls of the Dead") on the other hand, however, it is "the beautiful Mundane Shell" where the adjective qualifies its character as very distant from pure illusion and distortion. A similar ambiguity is detected in the contrast of the "Net" and "habitation" which entails the play of the "homely" and "uncanny", and both versions of this ambiguity (death and beauty, domestication and uncanniness) are read into the very structure of the veil which is the eternalization of time. This is another analogy instrumental in the mechanism of veiling and unveiling: a possibility of eternity suddenly revealing itself in the temporal universe (cf. "Eternity is in love with the productions of time", *MHH*. K, 151) Thus, the veil is that **between** which separates two spans of eternity and, as such, carries in it an understanding of time as dreaming of eternity.

As Blake's disdain for the secretariat, bureaucracy, and institutionalized religion, informs us the veil is also another name for the unexpected turn taken by the evolution of writing which, although designed as a mode of transmitting laws (i.e. as a democratic influence in the society) suddenly found itself in a position of the essential instrument of overriding power. Writing is the veil, the **between**, separating the elite from the people. These are Derrida's comments upon Warburton's essay:

It is as if a catastrophe had perverted this truth of nature: a writing made to manifest, serve, and preserve knowledge — for custody of meaning, the repository of learning and the laying out of the archive — encrypts itself, becoming secret and reserved, diverted from common usage, esoteric. Naturally destined to serve the communication of laws and the order of the city transparently a writing becomes the instrument of an abusive power, of a caste of "intellectuals" that is 'this ensuring hegemony, whether its own or that of special interests: the violence of a secretariat, a discriminating reserve, an effect of scribble and script. This perversion is described as the violent effect of "veil".⁷⁵

The proces of uncovering, unveiling of a truth which was a descriptive way of dealing with truth as *alētheia*, can also be interpreted in Blake's terms as the interplay of dreaming and awakening, fallennes and redemption.

The veil, although superficially it can be explained away as "the film of matter which covers all reality"⁷⁶, circumscribes also an area where a possible breaking of that film, a tentative gap, a potential fissure, can take place. Since a rupture of the veil also occurs in and on the tex-

ture of the veil itself, what is glimpsed on the other side also belongs to the veil. The split in the veil demarcates that moment and place where eternity mixes, commingles with the veil, constitutes one whole with it; thus, the veil is "[...] the place of Redemption of awakening again into Eternity". The veil speaks of the impossibility of life without and outside the veil.

It is easy to distinguish between two ways of understanding the very term "veil" in Blake's writings: to start with, it appears as a disguise which masks the reality by means of a "bad writing", a dead letter of the Law:

He drew the Veil of Moral Virtue, woven for Cruel Laws,
And cast it into the Atlantic Deep to catch the Souls of the Dead (J. K, 646)

Thundering the Veil rushes from his hand, Vegetating Knot by Knot, Day
by Day, Night by Night; loud roll the indignant Atlantic Waves & the Erythrean, turning up the bottoms of the Deeps. (J. K, 648).

The Law is described in more details in *The Everlasting Gospel* where it functions as the epitome of the old, restrictive moral code:

He [Jesus] laid his Hand on Moses's Law:
The Ancient Heavens, in Silent Awe
Writ with Curses from Pole to Pole,
All away began to roll. (K, 754).

On the other hand, however, the veil seems to be not only a letter inscribed upon a stone, but also makes its presence felt as the very texture of human existence, as a surface upon which a letter is written or engraved. Thus, a dream of the veil is a dream of uniting what **WAS** with what **WILL BE** in a kind of grammatical and philosophical space and time of **WILL HAVE BEEN**. The veil functions as an interval which dreams such a myth of unity, although it incessantly reinscribes itself in the space that separates one from the other. The veil is a folded desire of consummation. In *Jerusalem* Blake identifies the folds and the veil, and what is more interesting, mediates the two terms with the concept of "Cherubim":

[...] Daughters of Albion Weave the Web
Of Ages Generations, folding unfolding it like a Veil of Cherubim. (J. K. 693)

„Cherubim" apart from their angelic connotations also introduce the subject of human sexuality. The "Veil of Cherubim" is this border territory which, separating the male from the female, prepares the way for a union of the two:

I discover thy secret places. Cordelia! I behold
Thee whom I thought pure as the heavens in innocence & fear,
Thy Tabernacle taken down, thy secret Cherubim disclosed. (*J. K.*, 644).

In another passage a reading of the veil as the female sex organ is even more explicit, but — simultaneously — it is more profoundly trapped in a never attainable desire for consummation and fulfillment:

In Beulah the Female lets down her beautiful Tabernacle
Which the Male enters magnificent between her Cherubim
And becomes One with her, mingling, condescending in Self-love
The Rocky Law of Condemnation & double Generation & Death. (*J. K.*, 656).

What is revealed in the passage is the veil, the hymen, as a myth of Oneness, as the identification of desire and consummation which is comprised by a reinscription of division and difference: in the moment of a supposed fulfillment the structure of a fissure reappears, a redoubling of dispersion, a version of the distance which prevents the partners of a dialogue concentrating instead on "Self-love". The world of generation is an inherently divided world, and Blake carefully underscores that the distinction between the two sexes is of crucial importance:

To Create a World of Generation from the World of Death,
Dividing the Masculine & Feminine, for the comingling
Of Albion's & Luvah's Spectres was Hermaphroditic. (*J. K.*, 690).

Entering, a sexual process of gratification of one's desire, is shown as illusive since it introduces the man into a further distance and, tearing of the veil, breaking of the hymen, is demonstrated to be just an unfolding of another fold, a reinstatement of the veil and the hymen. The figure of a hermaphrodite is significant as the one which in a clear way points out a tentative character of the union which, while seemingly removing the difference (between the sexes), emphasizes its existence by the impossibility of the final consummation. A hermaphrodite is a suspension of desire under the pretence of unity which, as a matter of fact, undercuts the very possibility of fulfillment of this desire. To demonstrate the intricacy of Blake's concept of the veil it is good to set it together with Flaxman's reading of the same motif. In the second lecture on sculpture Flaxman presents the "veil of the tabernacle [...] adorned with cherubim" as a mark of approbation given to artists who are, unlike in Blake, "the ministers of God's providence, or the guardians of His Holy Laws". Eventually, Flaxman reads the veil simply as a sign of the final impotence of art and artists who can pride themselves in their status of "the handmaids of religion".⁷⁷

In Blake's interpretation the veil is a territory which mingles the opposites but which, at the same time, introduces itself **between** them.

Analogically, the veil mixes up what WAS and the future, but places itself as an apposition to both: it is neither the memory of the past, nor the intuition of the future.

The shortest definition of the veil would hold that the veil is the between. To enter means not so much to be inside, but to be *entre*, to be between. This is a problem that draws Derrida's attention in his Mallarmé essay:

[...] the hymen, the confusion between the present and the nonpresent, along with all the indifferences it entails within the whole series of opposites [...] produces the effect of a medium as element enveloping both terms at once; a medium located between the two terms. It is an operation that **both** sows confusion **between** opposites and stands **between** the opposites at once. What counts here is the **between**, the in-betweenness of the hymen. The hymen takes place in the "inter-", in the spacing between desire and fulfillment, between perpetration and its recollection.⁷⁸

The veil as **betweenness** oscillates in the spectrum designated by two possibilities: it is a film concealing reality and, at the same time, it unconceals reality as nothing else than the film. The veil as a hymen can be penetrated, but the penetration is far from final since all it leads to is more folds; entering is to tear the veil in order to be envelopped by more folds of the veil, to be caught *entre*. Hence, a sexual union is both consummated and unfulfilled, the central point, the final signified is never reached, and the penetration is shown as a movement from one veil to another:

Albion hath enter'd the Loins, the place of the Last Judgment,
And Luvah hath drawn the Curtains around Albion in Vala's bosom.
The Dead awake to Generation! Arise o Lord, & rend the veil! (J. K, 656).

Penetration, entering, breaking of the hymen, insemination, turn out to be consecutive stages of the movement of tearing the film which, on the one hand, opens another fold in front of the penetrator and knits back the wound in the veil behind him, on the other. One could say that the veil VEILS itself, and penetration is nothing else but a constant dream of the floating curtains; the fold folds itself once again (a conception of something new, original) becomes a dissemination (a repetition, re-marking of the same).

Blake's hesitant and dialectic approach towards virginity is an extension of the problematic of the veil. Virginity is destroyed by a gratification of a desire (Blake warns that we should not be misled by "pale religious lechery" to call "that virginity that wishes but acts not" MHH. K, 160), but the act of penetration is a healing of the amorous wound in the hymen, as it reinstates virginity, restores the hymen, introduces another **between** to overcome. Hence, Oothoon having been raped by

Bromion still considers herself a virgin and, it is interesting to note, the language of her virginity has a marked sexual overtone, as it is a language of the hymen which endlessly reproduces itself. Juxtaposing herself to Theotormon who seeks "this hypocrite modesty", Oothoon "is not so":

[...] a virgin fill'd with virgin fancies
Open to joy and delight where ever beauty appears;
If in the morning sun I find it, there my eyes are fix'd
In happy copulation; if in evening mild, wearied with work,
Sit on a bank and draw the pleasures of this free born joy. (VDA. K. 194).

Virginity interpreted, as Northrop Frye suggests, as an "attempt to erase every »stain« of sexual suggested in the Gospels"⁷⁹, is a misreading of the idea of virginity which, first of all, inscribes itself in the pattern of Blake's thought where the active is always given the priority over the passive, but — mode profoundly — it tries to attain purity by means of the inadmissible short-cuts, trying in vain to disregard the inevitable detour of the "road of excess". Virginity as a "happy copulation" is embedded in the problem of a self-repetition of sign, of the fold, of the veil. Derrida (despite a fundamental difference which prevents him from allowing for the existence of the transcendental signified) speaks in the same way of the fold which is but a metaphoric figure for writing (*écriture*) with its endless movement of signifiers:

The fold is simultaneously virginity, what violates virginity, and the fold which, being neither one nor the other and both at once, undecidable, remains as a text, irreducible to either of its two senses. [...] But in the same blow [...] the fold ruptures the virginity it marks as virginity. Folding itself over its secret (and nothing is more virginal and at the same time more purloined and penetrated, already in and of itself, than a secret) it looses the smooth simplicity of its surface. It differs from itself, even before the letter opener can separate the lips of the book.⁸⁰

The "lips of the book" are not only a mouth that speaks, but also labia of the female sex organ, the "tabernacle" and *Jerusalem's* "secret places". Thus, the veil is enveloped in a complex problematic of the distinction between illusion and reality, male and female, time and eternity etc., but all these contrasts stem from this basic spacing between two marks, two signs, that constitutes writing by, simultaneous, putting them together and spacing, splitting them apart. The veil is another name of difference.

This movement between tearing the film and its inexorable restoration is markedly present in Blake. Thus, love is depicted as an embrace which tears, rends, the veil:

Albion lov'd thee: he rent thy Veil: he embrac'd thee: lov'd thee! (J. K. 643)

[...] that Veil which Satan puts between Eve & Adam
[...] a Veil that Saviour born & dying rends. (J. K, 686)

Hence the Infernal Veil grows in the disobedient Female,
Which Jesus rends & the whole Druid Law removes away [...] (J. K, 708).

The erotic is synonymous with the act of "rending", tearing apart of the "Infernal Veil" of inscription (the Law "removed away") and, apparently, of doing away with distance ("embrace"), dispensing with writing which is, in all its forms, cutting and splitting. John Evelyn in his *Sculptura* provides us with a long list of various materials used for writing only to conclude in a most Derridian mode:

But whether in all these, or whatever the subjects were [...] it was still my
Insculping, Scarrifying, and making a kind of incision into it [...].⁸¹

Nevertheless, the act of tearing, breaking the hymen, the veil, is accompanied by a countermovement towards a healing of the wound, knitting up the rent. Thus, Albion obsessed with the idea of sin complains of the nakedness of Gwendolen and Ragan, and unchastity of Vala:

All is Eternal Death unless you can weave a chaste
Body over an unchaste Mind! Vala! O that thou wert pure!
That the deep wound of sin might be clos'd up with the Needle
And with the Loom, to cover Gwendolen & Ragan with costly Robes
Of Natural Vitruue, for their Spiritual forms without a Veil
Wither in Luva's Sepulcher. (J. K, 643).

What Albion refers to as "the deep wound of sin" is a result of a double illusion: firstly, there hides a profound misunderstanding of the idea of sin and virginity usually read into the immaculate conception of Christ, the idea of sin originally present in a sex act which, according to Blake, "makes a Virgin Birth essential to the divinity of Jesus and which is founded upon a misunderstanding"⁸²; secondly, the wound expresses well a paradoxical nature of writing, of *écriture* — it opens the way for a penetration but, at the same time, it knows that a penetration is impossible because the movement of rending is constantly controlled by stitching up of the rent. Albion does not seem to be aware that the optative mood of his pronouncement has already been made true, that there has never been anything else but such a steady interplay of a knife, a sword, a pen, of tearing up blankness of skin and incessant healing, closing up of the perspective behind the movement of those sharp devices.

John Evelyn quotes the French name of etching and its instrument, the name which openly supports Blake's terminology of the "amorous theft" or "deep wound of sin", a mixture of the erotic and the criminal:

The French call it in particular *Taille douce*, Sweet or tender cut.⁸³

It is only logical, then, that a wound is dealt ("cut"), healed, and desired ("tender") at the same time. A curtain is momentarily spaced out to close again, the veil displays the inside which turns out to be only a version of the outside, and such a procedure becomes the very structure of existence. We have nothing but a constant readjustment of the veil which envelops us like in swaddles or a shroud ("In the Veil I fold my dying Limbs", *J. K.*, 646). Hence, the veil is subject to at least three qualifications:

1. It is treated as an obstacle, but an obstacle of the absolutely necessary type, a hindrance which cannot be simply overcome and closed.

2. This obstacle is, at the same time, dangerous and beautiful, thus free of an unequivocal evaluation.

3. It becomes a place where the contrast (inside/outside, good/bad, illusion/reality) meet, where "Contraries mutually Exist" (they do not exclude each other) or call each other out. It is made possible by Blake's doctrine of Contraries and Negations according to which "If thou separate from me, thou art a Negation, a mere Reasoning and Derogation from me" (*J. K.*, 639) which brings us to the conclusion that the veil is the very texture of life. Life does not exist without the veil. All these points appear in the following passage from *Jerusalem*:

My Soul is melted away, inwoven within the Veil.
Hast thou again knitted the Veil of Vala which I for thee
Pitying rent in ancient times? I see it whole it whole and more
Perfect and shining with beauty! (*K.*, 645).

Of special interest is the first line where Blake, by locking human life in the texture of the veil, inscribes it within his constant predicament constituted by the voiced belief in the sartorial character of reality hiding "the Naked Beauty", and the intuited suspicion that the veil, the garment, is all that is accessible to us. As we can see, Blake not only rejects the concept of truth as agreement but also he seems to, surreptitiously, doubt in the possibility of truth as *alētheia*; if the veil is the element of life, then what it can display when rent is only more veil. Although desperately clinging to the notion of "Naked Beauty", to the image of reality different from the "Vegetable world", Blake sees a possibility of such a world where the signified is separated from its signifier by a **long detour**, by an endless wandering of signifiers. This, as Derrida has noticed, largely undermines truth as unveiling of a thing, as *alētheia*:

The white veil that slips between the blanks, the spacing that guarantees both the gap and the contact, enables us no doubt to see the blanks; it determines them. It could therefore never be lifted without blinding us to death, either by closing or bursting. But inversely, if it were never lifted, if the hymen remained sealed, the eye would still have no greater capacity to. The hymen, therefore, is not the truth of an unveiling. There is no *alētheia* only a wink of hymen. A rhythmic fall. A regular (w)inclined cadence.⁸⁴

In the discussion between Jerusalem and Albion in the first chapter of *Jerusalem* Blake would also concede to the inevitability of the veil as the existential element of man; the veil is necessary since we cannot distinguish our life from it, and the only choice seems to be between various kinds of the net:

Why should Punishment Weave the Veil with Iron Wheels of War
When Forgiveness might it Weave with Wings of Cherubim? (*J. K.*, 645).

The verb that usually describes a mode of production of the veil is to "weave":

[...] beautiful net of gold and silver twine, thou hadst woven it with art
(*J. K.*, 643);

[...] the Veil of Mortal Virtue, woven for Cruel Laws (*J. K.*, 692);

Other Daghters Weave on the Cushion & Pillow Network fine (*J. K.*, 692);

[...] till the Victim rend the woven Veil [...] (*J. K.*, 701)

Once, in a long fragment of the Plate 67, the same verb is used in reference to the life-forming process which has already been announced in the line about the soul "inwoven in the Veil":

[...] and they drew out from the Rocky Stones

Fibres of Life to Weave, for every Female is a Golden Loom. (*J. K.*, 704).

Weaving as the mode of production of the veil introduces two moments of critical importance for Blake's theory of truth. First, it implies a scheme of general interrelatedness present in the work in which all threads have to be interwoven ("Everything in the text is interwoven"⁸⁵ claims Derrida) to form a coherent whole.

Second, if this is the case then it becomes impossible to find a beginning of the work, to demarcate a place or a zone where a given textile, gauze, veil, begins. If everything is interconnected, and particular threads function as a veil to each other (i.e. the "guarantee both the gap and the contact"), if everything is stitched together, then what we have in front of us is a game, a play of elements without a starting, final, or central point. Such a situation is considered by Derrida to be the impossibility of totalization resulting from writing as a fundamental feature of language:

If totalization no longer has any meaning it is [...] because the nature of the [...] language [...] excludes totalization. This field is in effect that **play**, that is to say, a field of infinite substitutions only because it is finite, that is to say, because instead of being an inexhaustible field, instead of being too large, there is something missing from it: a center which arrests and grounds the play of substitutions [...] this movement of play, permitted by the lack or absence of a center or origin, is the movement of supplementarity.⁸⁶

The veil is enveloped in the problematic of supplementarity, i.e. of interpretation which is deprived of the unequivocal destination point, since to "supplement" means not only to replace, but also to add something new to an old scheme. Supplementarity is a game of replacement, and — in Blake's terms — human life melted into a pattern of threads enwrapped in the veil becomes a life without a center, an everlasting detour. Life without a center is a reformulation of a thesis that claims that life is another version of writing, another reading of *écriture*. Derrida convincingly quotes a fragment from Littre's dictionary in which, having shown the etymology of the word "to weave", the lexicographer states that "in that long ago era when writing was unknown, most of the words used to designate a poetic composition were borrowed from the art of the weaver, the builder, etc."⁸⁷

The veil which is woven is the veil which is played, and which plays at the same time; we are caught in the play of the veil. According to Derrida, a play is constituted by the absence of a center, that is to say, by the nonpresence of a sanction which would impose its rules upon the field of a play from the outside. A play remains a play as long as it is self-oriented and self-governed. Spontaneity of human reaction so strongly emphasized by Blake is congruent with the idea of the game the mode of which

[...] is that of spontaneous act, of vital impulse. Play is, as it were, existence centered in itself. The motivation of play does not coincide with that of other human activities.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, the transcendental shines all the time through the Vegetable world. On the one hand, Blake seems to accept the self-centeredness of the play, but this is counterbalanced by an explicit tendency towards a breaking of the shell, towards seeing THROUGH not WITH the eye.

A difference between the two propositions makes all the difference between the two philosophies: one which agrees upon a movement of signifiers circling within the magic boundary of the play, and the other which tries to establish a clear-cut relationship of priority of the transcendental signified over a chain of signifiers. Thus, we will have a philosophy of "eternity in love with the productions of time" complemented by a theory of material things being images of eternal truths. Blake, very far from underestimating a role of the material universe, sees its function precisely as a signifier of the signified transcendental reality:

The connoisseurs and artists who have made objections to Mr. B's mode of representing spirits with real bodies, would do well to consider that the Venus, the Minerva, the Jupiter, the Apollo, which they admire in Greek statues are all of them representations of spiritual existencies, of Gods immortal, to the mortal perishing organ of sight [...], (*DesCat.* K, 576).

Blake codes in his productions a desire for originality ("spiritual existences") which is another version of the Golden Age which demarcates a beginning of the degradation of humanity. Although very critically biased against Rousseau, Blake repeats the French philosopher's tendency towards reinstating the origin, the source, without which human thinking becomes nostalgic and decentered. The world, as Blake sees it, is 1) a steady retracing of the phenomena to their origin, and 2) a movement towards a reestablishment of the place that has been originary ascribed to them:

1. All had originally one language and one religion [...]. (*DesCat.* K, 579)
Greek Fables originated in Spiritual Mystedy & Real Visions. (*L.J.* K, 605)
2. Human power cannot go beyond either what he does, or what they have done; it is the gift God, it is inspiration and vision. (*Des Cat.* K, 579).
The human mind cannot go beyond the gift of God, the Holy Ghost. (*DesCat.* K, 579).

The regularity of these two movements is, however, disturbed by a theory of contraries which emphasizes a relative character of certain fundamental concepts, thus alluding to the Golden Age as escaping rationalistic categories ("Without Contraries is no Progression", *MMM* K, 149). The Golden Age described as "the religion of Jesus" (*DesCat.* K, 579) is the origin, the source, and the beginning, still there lurks in this order a possibility of a further disorder, or an order of another kind, thus questioning the absolute character of the originary area. The rule of the moral code (Ten Commandments) are bracketed by the spontaneity of action, by impulse, i.e. by the play which is the element of discourse rejecting "all reference to a center, to a subject, to a privileged reference, to an origin, or to an absolute *archia*."⁸⁹

12. The Unapproachable Center

Masks, or names.

The name makes it so; vocare est invocare. It's all in a name. I'm a noun, the schizophrenic girl said — Crazy Jane said — noun, none, nun. I'm a nomen or no man; my name is no man, Odysseus, Everyman, said.

— Norman O. Brown, *Love's Body*

When Blake claims that "no virtue can exist without breaking these ten commandments. Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse, not from rules" (*MHH.* K, 158), he attracts our attention to the presence of the origin (Jesus), but, at the same time, he questions the objective all-

-encompassing character of such a center by reducing it to the sphere of impulses, i.e. by translating a center into a language of a decentered individual. Such a transition from the generalizing center to the particularizing individual inscribes itself within the development of writing which, from the sacred script, evolved towards a more democratic form of notation. Hence, it is noticeable in ancient Greece that

[...] sales, bequests, keeping of accounts and registration of contracts and trade ties followed the spread of writing. A commercial class opposed land-owners and the nobility and supported individualism and the rise of tyrants.⁹⁰

We ought to carefully steer away from confusing Blake's insistence upon **particulars** with the economy-induced individualism which was but a mutation of the old, hieratic centralism, and thus it is far from coincidence that Urizen, Blake's God of oppression, is a tyrant and a God of writing at the same time. Blake presents here the last phase of the evolution of writing which, as historical documentation suggests, spreads slowly from the domain of economy to master finally even the sphere of religion. This is what René Labat finds in his research on a role of writing in ancient Mesopotamia:

[...] cette évolution est accélérée par la *generalisation progressive* de l'écriture. De l'*économie*, elle gagne successivement d'autres domaines: le *notariat* d'abord, vers 2600, pour les contrats de ventes et achats, ou plus exactement d'échange; puis, vers 2400 le *domaine du droit*, sous forme de jugements, de procès, de promulgation de lois... Le domaine *religieux* et proprement *littéraire* est le dernier que les scribes conquièrent sur la tradition orale.⁹¹

The very word **center** which lies at the very heart of Derrida's system, makes its appearance also in Blake's writings where it is originally associated with Luvah, and consequently it relates to music, love, desire, moon, heart, and nostrils. In the first chapter of *Jerusalem*, a "center" is first presented as operating in the system of the four directions, "Four Points":

And the Four Points are thus beheld in Great Eternity:
West, the Circumference: South, the Zenith: North,
The Nadir: East, the Center, unapproachable for ever.
These are the Four Faces towards the Four Worlds of Humanity
In every Man. (K, 632).

A qualification of the center as "unapproachable for ever" signifies two things: (1) it is shown as present, as a source of material existence ("The Vegetative Universe opens like a flower from the Earth's center in which is Eternity", J. K, 633); but (2) its presence is only intuited. Since it cannot be attained the center translates itself from the spatial

categories into the language of time, Eternity lies in the center to the degree to which it institutes the direction of a neverending march, incessant movement towards the center which, thus, acquires a character of the horizon. We have, then, two translations involved in the way Blake understands "center": first, from the language of space into the language of time, second — from a peculiar type of a spatial orientation that may be described as centripetal (a "center" as a central point located in the middle into a **centrifugal** movement) a "center as a **horizon**. In this wise, the center, at the same time, articulates and disarticulates itself, is simultaneously absent and present, is the origin of which we know but which we cannot achieve, reconstruct; thus, it becomes a nonoriginary origin, the one that functions as its own myth, its own sign born in and out of distance and, as such, it can be only a trace of the origin. As Derrida puts it:

From the moment that the sign appears, that is to say from the very beginning, there is no chance of encountering anywhere the purity of "reality", "unicity", "singularity".³²

A movement towards the center is not only never-ending, but also it has all the symptoms of a **fall**. In Blake's cosmology the "chaotic" four universes surrounding the Mundane Egg start a rapid degradation when they are compelled to move towards the Center:

But when Luvah assum'd the World of Urizen to the South
And Albion was slain upon his mountains & in his tent,
All fell towards the Center in dire ruin sinking down. (*M. K*, 500)

Similarly, in *Jerusalem* where only the word order is different ("All fell towards the Center, sinking downwards in dire ruin", *K*, 691). The fall leaves in the North "solid Darkness Unfathomable without end" (*K*, 691), and the Center itself loses its traditional requisites of radiance and shining and becomes (1) darkened, (2) dislocated. In both cases, while still functioning as a center, it is deprived of its fundamental status of the originator; a center is its own shadow, and appears as a bracketed center.

1. Albion's Circumference was clos'd: his Center began dark'ning Into the Night of Beulah, and the Moon of Beulah rose Clouded with storms. (*J. K*, 642)
2. In a sweet vale shelter'd with cedars, that eternal stretch
Their unmov'd branches, stood the hall, built when the moon shot forth
In that dread night when Urizen call'd the stars round his feet;
Then burst the Cnter from its orb, and found a place beneath. (*Am. K*, 204)

Further characteristics of the center include (3) selfishness (a center as **centralization**), and expansionism (4) (a center as a form of **monstrosity**, a **polypus**).

3. What is Above is Within, for every-thing in Eternity is translucent:
The Circumference is Within, Without is formed the Selfish Center,
And the Circumference still expands going forward to Eternity,
And the Center has Eternal Estates; these States we now explore.
(J. K, 709)

The center is not only qualified as "selfish", but it acquires a malevolent immobility: while the circumference expands, the center remains folded upon itself along the edge of error. The center becomes the seat of "Eternal States", that is to say of the frozen island of error through which a man has to struggle his way. Not only is the center degraded to a domain of error, but also it loses somehow a central location and becomes a transit area through which the man moves. What we have then is rather a chain of "centers", a horizon of immovable points demarcating the existential itinerary of the man ("Man Passes on, but States remain for Ever; he passes through them like a traveller", *LJ. K*, 606).

In (4) the center is demonstrated to be a product of Selfhood and its expansion in the form of a monster. The passage to follow, in its use of words referring to a production of organs of the body and the terminology reminiscent of a biological gestation, helps to present the center as a process, a place, a womb where the unnatural being is gestated, hatched, and finally born:

So spoke the Spectre to Albion: he is the Great Selfhood,
Satan, Worship'd as God by the Mighty Ones of the Earth,
Having a white Dot call'd a Center, from which branches out
A Circle in continual gyrations: this became a Heart
From which sprang numerous branches varying their motions,
Producing many heads, three or seven or ten, & hand & feet
Innumerable at will of the unfortunate contemplator
Who becomes his food: such is the way of the Devouring Power. (*J. K*, 659).

The center in (4) is a place from where the unnatural birth dominates and expands over the whole universe. The process of "branching out" of the "polypus", of an amorphous creature deprived of a circumference and outline extends in a long line of monstrous birthgivings: "a white Dot" produces a Circle, this gives a "Heart" which, in turn, produces "numerous branches", and they branch out again into "innumerable Heads". A deadly character of such a delivery is exemplified in another text where Blake identifies the unnameable and formless creature, something that Derrida calls a "terrifying form of monstrosity"⁹³, with death:

The Empyrean groan'd throughout. All Eden was darken'd.
 The Corpse of Albion lay on the Rock; the Sea of Time Space
 Beat round the Rock in mighty Waves, as a Polypus
 That vegetates beneath the Sea, the limbs of Man vegetated
 In monstrous forms of Death, a Human polypus of Death (FZ, K, 304).

Blake's "monstrous forms of Death" expresses the degradation coming from a Satanic center and contains in itself a major breakthrough in philosophy which unexpectedly started to see a danger present in the center, but still makes use of this concept not only with a view of certain philosophical nostalgia but, first of all, hoping to elevate "monstrous forms" to the level of the spiritual.

Derrida's "terrifying form of monstrosity" with which he closes his famous essay on *Structure, Sign, and Play* is a reaction to, and a description of, a situation where the center has been eventually erased, or — more strongly — where the center has been demonstrated to have never existed. Hence, Derrida's phrase inscribing itself between the Nietzschean acceptance and Rousseauistic refusal of "a world of signs [...] without truth, and without origin"⁹⁴ renders the center thoroughly impossible. If, for Blake, a maternal womb was the place of unity and the act of delivering a child was interrupting this unity, still there was a radical innocence present in the infant. Monstrosity is, in Blake, a form of Death which has to be elevated to life with the dramatic ambiguity, marked or, better, re-marked nonpresence of the origin, of the center in the background.

For Derrida monstrosity is the **only** form possible, since the process of delivery never stops, maternal womb never fully ceases to bear the child, in the same manner as a signifier never identifies with its signified. Thus, the Derridian „form of monstrosity" refers rather to the process than to the product: the umbilical cord, placenta, and the waters are more radically present in Derrida's version of the childbirth than the infant itself. Thus, while in Blake a child remains nameless as a sign for its innocence, a relative closeness to the original source of Being, in Derrida namelessness of the suckling marks its nonoriginality, nonspecification, muteness: the child is there to the extent to which it is dramatically interwoven with its mother's organism. Significantly, while in Blake's obstetrics the child is finally named with a name of an existential mood, in Derrida the child remains nameless, preserves its status of a non-child:

"I have no name:
 I am but two days old".
 What shall I call thee?
 "I happy am,
 "Joy is my name".
 Sweet joy befall thee! (SI, K, 118)

Blake's minimum of the name is preserved in the belief, typical of the poet, that it is possible to establish an individual character of an essent without, however, submitting it to the fully individualized, personalized economy of the written name. Henri Lévy-Bruhl in his essay on *L'écriture et le droit* emphasizes the fact that a written name usurps the place of the person and becomes the closest modern continuation of the magical practices which unite

[...] la personne au nom qu'elle porte [...]. Ainsi s'expliquerait que l'écriture... ait pu créer à l'encontre d'une personne une malédiction qui, en vertu d'un processus bien connu de laïcisation du droit, se serait progressivement muée en une damnation ayant perdu son caractère religieux pour être désormais sanctionnée par la loi civile.⁹⁵

Derrida's version of the childbearing process differs considerably, although both are ponderings upon life as a form of monstrosity:

Here there is a kind of question [...] whose conception, formation, gestation, and labor we are only catching a glimpse of today. I employ these words, I admit, with a glance towards those who, in a society from which I do not exclude myself, turn their eyes away when faced by the as yet unnameable which is proclaiming itself and which can do so, as is necessary whenever a birth is in the offing, only under the species of the nonspecies, in the formless, mute, infant, and terrifying form of monstrosity.⁹⁶

13. Drawing. Mimesis as an Ontological Gesture

Quand j'écris le mot "vin" avec de l'encre celle-ci ne tient pas le rôle essentiel, mais permet la fixation durable de l'idée de vin. L'encre contribue ainsi à nous assurer du vin en permanence. Écrire et dessiner sont identiques en leur fond.

— Paul Klee, *Philosophie de la Creation*

[...] le dessin est au centre de mon concept. Je veux parler du dessin qui existe à l'intérieur même de ma peinture.

— Barnett Newman interviewed by Dorothy Seckler

Since Blake himself says "Enough, or too much" (K, 152), and "you never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough" (K, 152), his definition of life must be based on a kind of surplus. A life seen within the horizon of the copy elevated to the original, a sexual union *aufgehoben* to virginity, is a reduplication of itself, is an endless

repetition, self-commentary of a phenomenon upon itself. What is perceived from the outside as life is only an excess of life within a phenomenon, this life in what Blake calls "Corporeal Vegetation" is a surplus of life in "Eternity":

In Eternity one Thing never Changes into another Thing. Each
Identity is Eternal [...] Eternal Identity is one thing Corporeal
Vegetation is another thing. (LJ. K, 607).

Thus, an object is in Blake's theory seen constantly against the background of the eternal "Identity", that is to say, is foregrounded as rooted in eternity, is a changeable extension of the unchangeable original. One could define a thing as a movement from the stability of Eternity towards the instability of the earth, although such a movement can never be completed as it is measured precisely by the distance, by the **between** which separates the two regions. This **between** is the shortest definition of life in Blake's philosophy which saw the existential process as growth, development, blossoming of a thing out of itself through the openness, a sudden rift in the unity, in the unnameable, in-different structure of Being. Thus, life is but a synonym of difference as played against the primeval, originary unity that foregrounds it.

This is how we can interpret aphorisms like "The apple tree never asks the beech how he shall grow; nor the lion, the horse, how he shall take his prey" (MHH. K, 152), or "The rat, the mouse, the fox, the rabbit watch the roots; the lion, the tiger, the horse, the elephant watch the fruits" (MHH. K, 151) summarized well in the famous ending of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: "One Law for the Lion & Ox is Oppression" (K, 151). In all these sentences a thing is present as a fulfillment of a process which brings a thing from Eternity to the material world. Characteristically enough, Eternity is viewed as the fullness of a given object, its anchoring in Being; Eternity is nothing else but a thing which flows from itself, i.e. it lies in the area that separates but at the same time joins the inside and the outside of a thing. **Eternity, in Blake's categories, is an outlining of a thing, is uncovered in the movement of a line which draws a thing from Being, pulls a thing out of itself.** This is how Meister Eckhart understands life as a fundamentally selfgenerating process traceable in a thing flowing out of itself:

Life means a certain overflow by which a thing welling up within itself, first completely floods itself, each part of itself interpreting every other, before it pours itself out and wells over into something external.⁹⁷

Life is, then, caught in the process of self-emergence, self-multiplication, which is also how Heidegger sees it in his reconstruction of the old Greek concept of *physis*:

What does the word *physis* denote? It denotes self-blossoming emergence (e.g. the blossoming of a rose), opening up, unfolding, that manifests itself in such unfolding and perseveres and endures in it; in short, the realm of things that emerge and linger on. According to the dictionary *phyein* means to grow or make to grow [...]. This opening up and inward-jutting-beyond-itself must not be taken as a process among other processes that we observe in the realm of the essent. *Physis* is being itself, by virtue of which essents become and remain observable.⁹⁸

We can see that both in Heidegger and the unusual fourteenth century German thinker life is a certain double quality of a thing: it is the ability, a mysterious tendency, to transcend itself, to call into existence an object which is and is not identical with a thing anchored in Eternity. Life is inherently wrapped up in this awkward mimesis through which an object stands out from Being as external to itself while remaining profoundly rooted and related to its essence, to its "thingness". Eckhart's object which "wells within itself" only to "well over into something external" is a more descriptive version of the same play of inside/outside Heidegger notices in elaborate formula "inward-jutting-beyond-itself" (*in-sich-aus-sich-hineinstehen*). Such an ontological mimesis is far from mere copying since what it consists in is the significance of the **between** that separates *in-sich* and *aus-sich*, a territory where both the essence of a thing (a so called "original") and its externalization, its surplus (a "copy") belong, where they stand together.

As we can see, Blake's ontological mimesis entails not a relationship between the copy and the original but a possibility of their union, of standing together in the act of growing, in *physis*. In other words, mimesis, imitation, copying, an act of pedagogical value Blake's seven year apprenticeship with Basire is an act of recognition of, belongs to the region which is more powerful than man, and which precedes man as an individual. In the ontological mimesis the copist and the object copied belong together in a common realm of Being. Hence the objection Blake raises against Reynolds and his concept of a forced independence which supposedly, outrules and erases the dangers of copying viewed by Reynold as a debilitating and enslaving practice. Blake must have been annoyed by Reynolds's insistence on the personality of the artist who is represented as a center of the aesthetic act, as one who imposes his own rules rather than, as Blake would believe it, one who is subject to the same jurisdiction as the object copied. Thus, Blake comments critically on Reynolds's dictum that "the man of true genius, instead of spending all his hours [...] in measuring statues and copying pictures, soon begins to think **for himself** [...]" (K, 448).

Reynolds's call for the artist's independence is founded upon a significant movement of the 18th century philosophy according to which only man's intervention in nature can bring out its truth. In short, man is

a being in which nature obtains awareness of itself. Pope's adage about "Nature methodiz'd" rings in the following fragment of one of the discourses:

[...] he [artist] corrects nature by herself, her imperfect state by her more perfect. His eye being enabled to distinguish the accidental deficiencies [...] and deformities of things, from their general figures, he makes out an abstract idea of their forms more perfect than any one original [...]. This idea of the perfect state of nature, which the artist calls the Ideal Beauty is the great leading principle, by which works of genius are conducted. (R, 44).

This, however, is linked with the acceptance of a central point which can justify such a transition from a specific to abstract, ideal form. Only from such a privileged position is it possible to speak of, as Reynolds does, deficiencies and deformities of objects.

A Platonic belief in the "central form" located outside a thing which is analysed, methodized, corrected separates Reynolds from Blake who limited his analysis to a thing itself erasing, in his theory of drawing, the division of outside/inside. In *Discourse III* we read:

Thus it is from a reiterated experience and a close comparison of the objects in nature, that an artist becomes possessed of the idea of that central form [...] from which every deviation is deformity. (R, 45).

As we can see the inevitable consequence of the central form theory is the idea of order which operates as an absolute law regulating factor in the world. The order suggested by Reynolds, worked out by man and imposed upon reality, is the effect of strictly listed procedures "digesting, methodizing, and comparing our observations" (R, 44) and as such, is totally alien to things analysed and wholly dedicated to eliminating their most constitutive features. Reading Reynold's instruction we cannot help thinking that his aesthetic theory defines a thing by overcoming, erasing differences between a given object and other things:

[...] the power of discovering what is deformed in nature, or in other words, what is particular and common, can be acquired only by experience; and the whole beauty and grandeur of the art consists [...] in being able to get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities, and details of every kind. (R, 44).

It is only logical, then, that Reynolds will relegate any painting which concentrates on differences, on the clear-cut outline to the level of lower, or ornamental style which tries "to exhibit the minute discriminations, which distinguish one object of the same species from another", while the heroic style focuses on "nature in the abstract", and represents in any object "the character of its species". In other words, a thing is not a partner of man but is offered to him and his methodizing strate-

gies, does not enter into the ontological relationship with man, but exists outside him as a testing ground of his analysing cleverness.

A difference between a mimesis as a mirroring procedure and a mimesis as an ontological gesture lies in the status of the object which is copied. If, as Reynolds believes, such an object is given once and for all totally at our disposal, then object is merely a model, a prototype, radically external to the copist; if, however, the object appears as demanding our assertion, that is to say as a subject to our Care, then we do not remain outside it but are gathered together with it in something larger than either of us. What matters is a tension between the object copied and the copist, a tension which makes them different from one another, and still helps them to remain within a common field. In Blake's terms such a strife is translated into a conflict and compatibility of "This" and "The World of Imagination":

And I know that This World Is a World of Imagination & Vision. I see Every thing I paint in This World, but Every body does not see alike. To the Eyes of a Miser a Guinea is More beautiful than the Sun [...]. The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the Eyes of others only a Green thing that stands in the way. Some See Nature all Ridicule & Deformity, & by these I shall not regulate my proportions; & Some Scarce see Nature at all. (K, 793).

Blake's ontological mimesis implies a necessity of such a bridge between the seen and the unseen. Blake's terse formula describing the consequences of an expiry of such a strife is given a more elaborate treatment in Heideggers's *Introduction to Metaphysics* where it is analysed in terms reminiscent of the Blakeian dychotomy of seeing WITH and THROUGH the eye:

Where struggle ceases, the essent does not vanish, but the world turns away. The essent is no longer asserted (i.e. preserved as such) Now it is merely found ready-made; it is datum. The end result is no longer that which is impressed into limits (i.e. placed in its form); it is merely finished and as such available to everyone, already there, no longer embodying any world — now man does as he pleases with what is available [...]. The original world-making power, *physis*, degenerates into a prototype to be copied and imitated. The original emergence and standing of energies [...] becomes a visibility of things that are already there and can be pointed out. The eye, the vision, which originally projected into potency, becomes a mere looking over or gaping at. Vision has degenerated into mere optics.⁹⁹

In this longish passage we immediately recognize places where Blakeian philosophy shines through in the clearing only slightly clouded and veiled by another, more metaphysical, terminology. Heidegger's opposition of an object "impressed into limits" and a mere "datum" is synonymous with Blake's consistent claim that material objects are rooted in the ce-

lestial reality ("The roaring of lions, the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea, and the destructive sword, are portions of Eternity, too great for the eye of man", *MHH*. K, 151). Besides, the very phrase "impressed into limits" considers the lifegiving process of *physis* as a generation of lines, as a fundamental **outlining** of objects, that is to say, as asserting them through the power of a contour which draws the object from its maternal region of Being, tears it away from it, but at the same time provides it with life, makes it accessible to the human eye. A human realization of *physis* is precisely this **existential drawing** where a double meaning of the verb to "draw" is carefully preserved: it "draws", i.e. supplies a thing with a contour, and also "draws" it out of Being. Such a philosophy of drawing is close to Blake's who, as we have already demonstrated not only proclaimed the aesthetic importance of the line, but also established a marked ontological-existential character of the outline. Hence, we move from aesthetics ("Every Line is the Line of Beauty", *PA*. K, 603, which ought to be compared with Heidegger's statement: "Beauty [*Schönheit*] is the highest way of Being, which means: pure emerging out of itself and shining [*Scheinen*]. The oldest of the Greek thinkers said *physis*"¹⁰⁰), through a vision of life as the **outlining power** (Blake's equivalent of *physis* as "self-blossoming emergence": "The great and golden rule of art, as well as life, is this: that the more distinct, and wirey the bounding line, the more perfect the work of art", *DesCat*. K, 585), to an all-inclusive concept of drawing as a **meta-activity**:

Painting is drawing on Canvas, & Engraving is drawing on Copper, & Nothing Else; & he who pretends to be either a Painter or Engraver without being a Master of drawing is an Imposter (*PA*. K, 594).

Drawing is Execution, & nothing Else, & he who draws best must be the best Artist (*PA*. K, 602).

We should not let go unnoticed a change in the grammatical voice; when Heidegger speaks of the "asserted" thing he blurs the agent, darkens our vision, makes the man a go-between, an intermediary stage, between the world of gods and the earth of the mortals, to which he juxtaposes a situation where the man facing a "datum" is free to do with it "as he pleases". Such a grammatical movement from the passive to the active has nothing to do with a depreciation of human efforts, but it definitely locates the man in the sphere where he loses his central position from which he manipulates and distributes things, in the realm in which he belongs together with things. This is a region where the man does not claim but is claimed again by Being:

Before he speaks man must first let himself be claimed again by Being, taking the risk that under this claim he will seldom have much to say.¹⁰¹

The appearance of man must inevitably be concomitant with his disappearance. Blake does not say anything different when he describes his own writing process as a "Dictate", a copying, a hearing and listening to the celestial voices. A poet, for Blake, is one who, first of all, is able to listen before he starts speaking, and even then he speaks from within the territory that he cannot claim as his own, but in which he belongs on equal terms with the things he is speaking about.

Imagination is the Divine Vision not of the World, or of Man, nor from Man as he is a Natural Man, but only as he is a Spiritual Man (*AnWords*. K, 783);

I hear his advice & eevn now write from his Dictate. Forgive me for expressing to you my Enthusiasm which I wish to partake of Since it is to Me a Source of Immortal Joy: even in this world by it I am the companion of Angels (*Let*, K, 797).

In this context it is appropriate to quote Heidegger's dictum that a man is needed "with respect to the bringing of a tidings [*Kunde*], with respect to the preserving of a message"¹⁰², and his definition of a poet as "inconsequential [...] almost like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge."¹⁰³

Consequently, the distinction between "vision" and "optics" is nearly a literal repetition of a clear-cut differentiation between the "fourfold vision" and "single vision" in Blake. Even the association of a degenerated vision with "optics" is essentially Blakeian. In a letter to Thomas Butts Blake quotes his own poem composed "while walking from Felp-ham to Lavant":

Now I a fourfold vision see,
And a fourfold vision is given to me;
'Tis fourfold in my supreme delight
And threefold in soft Beulah's night
And twofold Always. May God us keep
From Single Vision & Newton's sleep! (K, 818).

Finally, Heidegger sees the continuation of optics in a "mere looking" and the discrepancy between that and the eye as "potency" rephrases Blake's dychotomy of seeing WITH or THROUGH the eye.

13. Signs, Signals, Ciphers

We have lost the cosmos, by coming out of responsive connection with it, and this is our chief tragedy.

— D. H. Lawrence *Apocalypse*

How can I be in my brain if the brain is part of the picture of me?

— R. D. Laing, *The Facts of Life*

There is, however, one more point in Heidegger's quotation from the previous chapter which calls for our attention, as it is particularly important for this frontier of thinking where hermeneutics borders on semiotics. In his description of the degradation of vision into optics Heidegger seems to be questioning the primeval and originary status of a thing as a sign. An object becomes a sign only after the fall, that is to say when the "original emergence" has been translated into "already there". A thing can function as a sign, can be "pointed out" only when it has lost its energy of physis, of selfemergence. A thing which can be pointed out can also point out to the originary sphere, but in this very way it betrays it, becomes secondary and lifeless. As a critic of Martin Heidegger's thought notices:

The literary work [...] does not point to Being as a sign would; instead, within the text's unique realm, the literary work brings forth Being as a symbol does [...] the literary work alone "shines", but the light it harbours is Being.¹⁰⁴

The distinction described by the critic as a rift between a sign and a symbol is less obvious in Heidegger's original writings, although definitely not less decisive. In *Unterwegs zur Sprache* Heidegger unveils a basic fissure as one between a sign (*Zeichen*) and signal (*Wink*):

Ernuntert durch Ihren Hinweis, das Wort sei Wink und Nicht Zeichen im Sinne der blossen Bezeichnung.¹⁰⁵

The main controversy between the two notions lies in the fact that while signs are founded upon the principle of a difference between the signifier and the signified, signals are inherently co-present with what they are signals of. Thus, while signs are "activist" in the sense of pointing out ("im Sinne der blossen Bezeichnung"), signals are "inactive" as they do not speak but are spoken by language, do not point out but mark a sort of impossible trace which is to bring us to the source of thinking. This trace is called "impossible" because the spring is already contained in the thinking, does not exist outside its horizon. In other words, signals are, so to say, natural and immanent growths blossoming out of life, and may be figuratively described as "gestures of life" in opposition to "words of life", i.e. as manifestations with minimum or no difference at all. They are what Derrida calls forth in Rousseau and terms a myth of a language without difference, a dream of immediacy within language:

[...] a first moment of sign without speech, when passion, beyond need but short of articulation and difference, expresses itself in an unheard of way: an **immediate** sign [...] The movement of the magic wand that traces with so

much pleasure does not fall outside of the body, Unlike the spoken or written sign, it does not cut itself off from the desiring body of the person who trace or from the immediately perceived image of the other.¹⁰⁹

The gratification of desire so markedly manifest in Blake's writings ("Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained" *MHH*. K, 149), and a revaluation of certain fundamental dichotomies between Good and Evil as paralld to Active and Passive ("the chains are the cunning of weak and tame minds which have power to resist energy", *MHH*. K, 155) generate on a semiotic plane a distinction between a "Fable" or "Allegory" on the one hand, and "Vision", on the other.

The Last Judgment is not Fable or Allegory, but Vision. Fable or Allegory are a totally distinct inferior kind of Poetry. Vision or Imagination is a Representation of what Eternally Exists Really & Unchangeably (*LJ*. K, 604).

A literary theory with which this quotation is saturated holds that the basic criterion which enables us to draw a line between "allegory" and "Vision" is the absence or presence of life. If "vision" is "a Representation of what Eternally Exists, Really" then "Allegory" is characterized by the absence of a "real" existence which is substituted for by the supplement of the sign. It is true, as one may object that Blake uses the word "representation" when speaking of "vision", but what is implied here is not so much an act of substitution, of using a sign instead of a thing but rather a **re-presentation**, an act of a thing making itself present, a gesture of a thing presencing itself. A **re-presentation** is a process in which a thing presents itself anew in its essence, and what is more important, it is a dynamic quality of this occurrence which enables a translation of something eternal into a language of the temporal world. Thus, **re-presentation** is simply another name for the ontological mimesis which has already been discussed in this essay, a mimesis which combines "servile copying" with "criticism" through the insistence on the processual character of imitation. As a critic notices, even the English term *Be-ing* is basically gerundive and active, hence, when it comes to Heidegger and Blake's "even the word **Presence** is deceptive; better by far is to say **Presencing**."¹⁰⁷ "Allegory" is not a representation because it lacks the quality of existence, of re-presentation:

[...] in an allegorical abode where existence hath never come. (*Eur*. K, 240).

It is what Heidegger would call a "sign" (*Zeichen*) because it establishes a strict pattern of equivalences in which economy meets semiotics; in the same way as a signifier is a substitute and replacement of a signified, labour is a sign, an equivalent of value:

Shall not the Councillor throw his curb
Of Poverty on the laborious,
To fix price of labour,
To invent allegorical riches? (SLos. K, 247).

An allegory, a sign as a supplement, as a trace which marks the sad absence of its origin, is thus a domain of illusion: Jerusalem is doomed to live "in allegoric delusion & woe" (J. K, 735). A sign is, then, a form of a tyrannous God, a version of a "Mathematical Diagram", i.e. a form of death, or another name for the absence of life. In his remarks upon Dr. Thornton's book Blake does not fail to notice that the God of the learned theologian "is an Allegory of Kings & nothing Else" (K, 789). From Inni's work we know that a combination of secular and priestly power also took place within the paradigm of writing.

We should not forget, at the same time, what Blake is trying to define is not so much an abstract concept of allegory but its appearance within the structure of the world, where it does not occur in a pure state but exists as **place of allegoricity** in the movement of signifiers. Analogically, "Vision" is no more than a **place of visionality** which suddenly discloses itself in the world. Thus, there will be inlets of vision within the alegoricity of experience:

Note here that Fable or Allegory is seldom without some Vision. Pilgrim's Progress is full of it, the Greek Poets the same [...] (LJ. K, 604).

We have seen how Heidegger's distinction between a sign and a signal can become an interpretative tool for Blake's semiotics distinguishing between "Allegory" and "Vision". Foster Damon in his invaluable book on the ideas and symbols of William Blake calls "vision" "symbolism [...] which fails when its entire meaning is obvious."¹⁰⁸ However, Northrop Frye seems to evade the question of symbolism in Blake claiming that most of the meanings attached to the word are irrelevant to Blake."¹⁰⁹ Indeed, while treating the concept of a symbol as an operative category we remain trapped in the tradition which relegates it to the domain of equivalents which, although numerous, establish some kind of **outside** reality, a reality existing externally with regard to the sign. Thus, a symbol becomes only a more complex mode of reinstating the proposition between the inside and the outside, and in this sense it restores the outside as a sanction securing functionality of the sign.

What shall we call this strange semiotic construct in Blake's theory which unites transcendence and immanence, defines difference and, at the same time, returns it to the interiority of the world and things, make them belong to one primal area from which all things blossom in the process of *physis*? What is a name for this vehicle which like a symbol displays a range of possible meanings instead of one, but, unlike a sym-

bol, erases a difference between itself and these meanings? What is a term that would refer to this semiotic formation which does not stand for a meaning, but out stands together with a meaning in Being?

It is at this moment when we ought to rethink suggestions contained in the work of Karl Jaspers. Jaspers essentially supports the rupture between different types of traces:

Appearance is described and thought in concepts. Signs convey what I am and can be as myself. Transcendent reality [...] is manifested in ciphers [...]"¹⁰

and in a footnote the philosopher specifies his preference for the term „cipher” as opposed to the word „symbol”:

“Cipher”, a word I prefer to the word “symbol”, denotes the language of a reality that can be heard and addressed only thus and in no other way — while a symbol stands for something else, even though this may not exist outside the symbol. What we mean by a symbol is the other thing, which thus becomes objective and comes to be present in the symbol.¹¹

What the philosophy of ciphers embodies is a belief we find in our Heideggerian misreading of Blake, a belief Derrida sneers at from the top of his deconstructive hill: a story of a possible way of attaining the state which precedes all beings, and from which all essents derive, the myth which Derrida calls “nostalgic” in its refusal to find joy in the interplay of signifiers, in **a world without a center, i.e. without truth**. This is how Blake defines his activity:

The Nature of my Work is Visionary or Imaginative; it is an Endavour to **Restore** what the Ancients call'd the **Golden Age**. [emphasis added — TS] (*LJ*. K, 605).

A restoration of the Golden Age is a retracing of a trace to its beginning:

All these things are written in Eden. The artist is an inhabitant of that happy country; and if every thing goes on as it **has begun**, the world of vegetation and generation may expect to be opened again to Heaven, through Eden, **as it was in the beginning** [emphasis added — TS]. (*DesCat*. K, 478).

It is also an act of the ultimate “letting be” (what Heidegger calls *Gelassenheit*), of the inactive nonintervention in the being of things which only in this way can uncover the original region of Blake’s “Eternity”, or Heidegger’s “Being.” That is why the grammatical structure of tenses in the passage is dominated by the Present Perfect. Things ought to go the way they **have begun**, i.e. man cannot interfere with the course of things because he himself is also one of the phenomena of the world, he

also is "the letting happen of the advent of the truth"¹¹², which phrase Walter Biemel interprets in the following way:

By speaking of "letting come to pass" rather than of simply "positing" or "creating", Heidegger implies that in the final analysis the taking place of the openness [*Lichtung*] is not merely an achievement of man but that [...] man can receive only what the Being itself sends him and may open himself to or shut himself from this.¹¹³

Finally, the Golden Age may turn out to be lost, nevertheless its existence is never doubted:

The two pictures of Nelson and Pitt are compositions of a mythological cast [...] being copies from some stupendous originals now lost or perhaps buried till some happier age. (*DesCat.* K, 565).

Other qualifications emphasizing its eternal character ("Real, Unchangeable") support the view that what Blake is trying to retrace is the experience of *ousia* which Heidegger defines as "permanent presence."¹¹⁴ The movement towards *ousia*, towards what Blake calls the "Visionary or Imagination" is a journey towards the unknown. What we have then in a bulk of work known as writings of William Blake is a collection of visions (symbols, ciphers in opposition to "allegories") where the word hears the language of the Transcendence. Although Blake does not seem to heed the importance of language, nevertheless in the only fragment where he does speak openly about language he makes sure that it functions as a steady movement counteracting "melancholy" and "Dumb despair":

Los built the stubborn structure of the Language, acting against Albion's melancholy, who must else have been a Dumb despair. (*J.* K, 668).

Language acts against melancholy which, otherwise, would have had to remain dumb. This sudden **voicing** of a human mood — despair — opens language as a space of dialogue, first of all, a profound and primary dialogue with the totality of Being which must precede any dialogue with a human partner. If despair and melancholy are moods, and moods or "affective dispositions" are, according to Heidegger, a typical and indispensable characteristic of a being whereby "Dasein always seems to be enlightened in one way or another about its own position among the things for which it is naturally open"¹¹⁵, then language as a **voice of mood** must be tuned into Being where man does not come as a center and where the space of dialogue is opened by language prior to man.

This is what Heinrich Ott in his commentary upon the personal structure of language in Heidegger's philosophy calls "the hermeneutic structure of language":

[...] when man speaks he does not only name individual things for the purpose of the exchange of information about them. This would have been the state of affairs if man had been the master of language, if language had been indebted to man and man had not been indebted to language. In reality [...] while man names individual things and discusses them, he simultaneously lets appear the horizon within which these individual things appear to him and affect him. Both of these [...] things and world, are not produced by man; he receives them. Insofar as things affect man, they are already in the world, and the world in the things. Speech merely brings to the fore their being in one another.¹¹⁶

Language, as we can deduce it from Blake's concise comment, is a "stubborn structure" which reveals a mysterious plenitude from which it was derived, and which listens to the voice of the world preceding the voice of language. Hence, marks and traces constituting language are *imag-es* which are manifestations of mood, that is to say of our co-existence with things in the world which is prior to both. As Jaspers puts it in his philosophy of ciphers (the word, I assume, is a more likely equivalent of Blake's "vision" than a "symbol"):

Ciphers mean a language that is heard in ciphers alone, that does not refer to something else, and whose speaking subject is unknown, unknowable, untraceable. They can be interpreted, but only so as to leave their meaning inexhaustible.¹¹⁷

Language as a cipher, a vision, an *image-e* is then related to *imag-ination*. First, because it reevaluates a mystery and becomes not a vehicle of a secret solving reason but of a willing participation in the Unknown. What ciphers (Blake's "visions") do is not pointing out or at, but amalgamating language with a mystery. This is evident in Jasper's quotation, as well as in the following passage from **The Last Judgment**:

The Nature of Visionary Fancy, or Imagination, is very little known, & the Eternal nature & permanence of its ever existent Images is consider'd as less permanent than the things of Vegetative [...] Nature; yet the Oak dies as well as the Lettuce, but its Eternal Image & Individuality never dies, but renews by its seed; just so the Imaginative Image returns by the seed of Contemplative Thought [...]. (K, 605).

Second, it overcomes the distinction between the objective and subjective. Blake is only a messenger of Unknown Voices, thus his idea of himself cannot, by definition, be of an imposing kind:

O Saviour pour upon me thy Spirit of meekness Love!
Annihilate the Selfhood in me: be thou all my life!
Guide thou my hand [...] while I write [...] (J. K, 623).

In Jaspers's work the annihilation of self is voiced as the identification of the subjective and objective. Thus, Jaspers insists that:

[...] objectivity and subjectivity are inseparable. The object of the cipher has no substance if it does not carry existential weight; as a mere fact is an empty concept. The subject side concerns the existential origin that is illuminated in the object side.¹¹⁸

That insistence is reiterated in his definition of a cipher:

Ciphers are statements about both Transcendence and the individual that encounters it. The truth in them is never purely objective, nor never purely subjective.¹¹⁹

Similarly in Heidegger where a man is relegated from his privileged position of the master of Being to the one to whose Care Being is temporarily consigned, and who must tend Being, nurse, and keep an eye on it, in general — he has to be necessarily WITH it, not above it. That is why, man is referred to in a later phase of Heidegger's thought as "the Shepherd of Being"¹²⁰ (*der Hirt des Seins*), where the very term "shepherd" identifies material and spiritual care.

Third, image as a manifestation of imagination is a place of **participation**. Since it overcomes the distinction between the known and the unknown, the subject and the object, it has to be a meeting place, a territory where not only do the contraries meet each other, but where they also meet and experience the world in which they meet. In other words, Blake's "visions" or "images", Jaspers's "ciphers" and Heidegger's "hints" (*Winke*) are of existential-ontological character, and only secondarily perform a semiotic function. Jaspers repeatedly comes back to the notion of "existential guidance" as inherent to ciphers and interweaves it with a surmounting of yet another pair of opposites, that of abstract, specific truth and individual phantasy:

We are not looking for the immense realm of facts from mythological or religious or philosophical history, nor do we follow psychological or sociological lines of questioning. What concerns us is the question of truth as such — more specifically, the question of the truth of ciphers that cannot be known, that can only be experienced existentially. In the historic form of ciphers we look for their appeal as possible truth. Thus, we are not acting objectively — that is to say, not scientifically, not historically, psychologically, or sociologically — but neither are we following subjective tastes and inclinations. Instead, we yield to the impacts that turn thinking into inner action wherever we are engaged.¹²¹

What for Jaspers is entailed in the act of "existential guidance" which transmutes both science and impressionistic introspection into "inner action", is what we discover as a deep foundation of Blake's doctrine of Imagination defined as the ontological and existential core of man. Thus, "Man is All Imagination" (*AnBerk.* K, 775), and as such it is imagina-

tion which becomes a core of existence "All Things Exist in the Human Imagination" (J. K, 707).

We have to be very careful not to commit a mistake of another version of humanism interpreting man in Blake's statement as a center of the world. All Blake's enunciation says is that man can possibly be a center to the extent to which he himself is a part of a center, in other words man is a center of existence only to the degree to which he is aware that he also belongs only to the horizon of existence. Man, experienced existentially by the world and experiencing the world existentially, is only the seat of imagination, and thus, in the Heideggerian rhetoric, the "letting-lie-forward" of the world (*Vorliegenlassen*), in the same way as any other object in the world performs the same action:

The Vegetating Cities are burn'd & from the Earth,
And the Bodies in which all Animals & Vegetations, the Earth & Heaven
Were contain'd in the All Glorious Imagination [...] (J. K, 679).

Hence, Blake's "Man [which] Is All Imagination" represents a reduced model of a man with regard to what is assumed to be a definition of a man: it leaves aside man defined in the ontic categories of the material world as existing without any link with its ontological source, and concentrates on a man as a phenomenon of participation, of a being **with** and **in** the world. Thus, Blake's "natural Man" is a man understood ontically, while "Spiritual Man" demonstrates man's rootedness in existence, man as overwhelmed by a situation no longer sanctioned by his domination, man as an "overflow of Being". "Man [which] Is All Imagination" is reminiscent of Heidegger's *Dasein* and Meister Eckhart's *Fünklein* which are terms depicting man in a constant relationship with the totality of Being, that is to say man **out-lined**, **out-standing**, existing out of the depth of *physis*.

What Blake is trying to capture in his famous dialectics of "seeing through" and "seeing with" the eye is precisely this transference from the mundane semiotics of wordly signification (signs, allegories, fables) to the foregrounding of the object, and man as its perceiver, in such a common horizon where he lets the objects stand out from Being (words as ciphers). When in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* Blake convinces the reader that "To create a little flower is the labour of ages" (K 152), or that "One thought fills immensity" (K, 151), he draws our attention to the fact that the very existence of an object conceals in itself what Heidegger calls "the primordial signification" which, according to the German philosopher, presents itself in the phenomenon, i.e. in what "shows itself, the manifest."¹²²

In other words, a cipher, a vision, a hint, is the place where what is merely talked about as an external object, a center of our descriptive

procedures (Heidegger's "present-at-hand" [*vorhanden*]), changes into what is a manifestation of itself, a manifestation of its own essence in our contact with it, with our **practical** use, i.e. existential, not analytic, experience of the object. A vision, or a cipher, is a domain where the participation materializes in the fundamental praxis, where difference tends to become blurred and, in the moment of particular intensity, disappears; in a cipher, God becomes man and vice versa. Hence in Blake:

They [Aristotle and Plato] [...] consider'd God as abstracted or distinct from the Imaginative World, but Jesus [...] consider'd God as a Man in the Spiritual or Imaginative Vision. (*AnBerk*. K, 774).

Similarly, Jaspers would emphasize the marked tendency evident in ciphers to refer to where both man and a cipher are rooted:

Ciphers point beyond themselves, at the root of things. They point to what we call "Being", or "Nothingness", or "Above-Being", or „before all Being", or "beyond all Being" [...].¹²³

If we followed the Derridian radical instruction that all interpretation speaks already with a borrowed voice, as **all interpretation is already a dissemination**, we could represent the movement of ciphers in the Heideggerian terms as movement from the *vorhanden* ("ready-at-hand") towards the *zuhanden* ("ready-to-hand"), which movement Joseph Kockelmans describes in the following manner:

In our primal praxis an intended thing is first ready to hand as a tool. If this thing becomes the object of communication [...] then along with the enunciation a modification of the character of the intentional orientation must be first enacted. The ready-to-hand thing which we were originally concerned with in our "practical" achievements changes now into something about which we are going to enunciate something [...]. Though this new way of looking at, precisely that which at first was ready-to-hand becomes concealed as ready-at-hand.¹²⁴

To recapitulate: a trace becomes a cipher when we let-it-lie-forward as an object ek-sisting out of Being, and the act of such a *Gelassenheit* is synonymous with praxis in which a thing reveals its essence in an imaginative, non analytic way. Heidegger speaks of the "proper use" (*Brauchen*) as of a procedure which brings "what is used into its essence (*Wesen*) and holds it there."¹²⁵ Blake in his *Laocoon*, the final and most mature manifesto, insists on the significance of practice. Thus, we have:

Praise is the Practice of Art (K, 776),
Without Unceasing Practice nothing can be done. Practice is Art.
If you leave off you are lost (K, 777).

Imagination transforms traces into ciphers, allegories into visions and, by being of the ontological-existential nature, it places man in a process of retracing of the origin. Blake describing his own pictures speaks of images, ciphers, visions (vehicles of Imagination) as of the only possible mode of recapturing the originary past:

The Artist having been taken in vision into the ancient republics [...] has seen those wonderful originals [...]. (*DesCat.* K, 565).

The most valuable agglomeration of ciphers, the most essential manifestation of Being, is the sphere of praxis, the real of the original making primal forming of *poiein*, that is to say, of arts.

As we have said, art is the field of manifestation of Being, the place of the closest proximity to the original source, the moment where the delay of the sign is the least:

The Eternal Body of Man is the Imagination, that is, God himself,
The Divine Body. (*L.* K, 776).

At the same time, however paradoxical it may seem, imagination is already inscribed in the horizon of detachment; it heralds proximity and unity, but does it by means which introduce distance and separation. In other words, imagination itself, this primal signification process transcending and uniting all marks, is already a mark. From a short list of opposites which Blake left us in his visionary sketch *The Ghost of Abel* it is evident that imagination is distinguished from Nature precisely on the basis of a certain linearity which enables things in imagination to **stand out**, i.e. to exist, while objects in nature tend to be blurred into one mass of indistinguishable phenomena. We are prepared for this ontological juxtaposition of "standing out" and "melting" of forms by "Memory" and "Inspiration" which underlie Blake's theory. In his late remarks on Homer and Virgil Blake, launching a violent attack against the militaristic culture of Rome and Greece, concludes:

Grecian is Mathematic Form: Gothic is Living Form, Mathematical Form is Eternal in the Reasoning Memory: Living Form is Eternal Existence. (K, 778).

Thus, an implacable paradox which Derrida uncovers in Western thought, a paradox of a myth of the origin uniting and overcoming all individual differences, a myth which itself is ultimately rooted in such a difference. One could say concisely that the unutterable is finally reduced to the utterable, or — in a more Derridian way — that the element of writing, of existential delay, is present already in speech which supposedly is expressive of the original un-differentiated plenitude. Similarly, Blake in his attempt to retrace the origin of the mark, to move towards the

"wonderful originals", towards the realm of the primal unity preceding all differences (God is one with man, the process of *physis* is a slow movement from the original unity to the forgetfulness of such a unity which, paradoxically, breeds memory and abstraction: "[...] men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast", *MHH*. K, 153), eventually speaks the language of the **outline**, i.e. of difference. Let us revert to the already signalled opening fragment of *The Ghost of Abel*:

Can a Poet doubt the Visions of Jehovah; Nature has no Outline but Imagination has. Nature has no Tune, but Imagination has. Nature has no Supernatural dissolves: Imagination is Eternity.

But the language of difference, of the outline, is the language of writing. Any talk of Eternity (source, beginning, origin) is already embedded in temporality (copying, nonoriginality). John Evelyn who, in many statements, reveals an unexpectedly "deconstructive" bias, derives writing from such an act of a fundamental difference:

We shall not with Epigenes in Pliny depose that this Art had its being from Eternity; because it is not sense, and would contradict its invention; but, if that may passe which St. Augustine affirms that the Protoplast our Father Adam, or others his good Genius the Angel Rasiel, were the first inventor of Letters, Sculpture may derive its Pedegree from the Infancy of the World, and contend for its Pre-eminence with most of the Antiquities which it so much celebrates.¹²⁶

Blake's definition of an object within the realm of imagination locates it in the line of synonyms like "Living Form", "Outline", "Tune", "Eternal Existence". As we can see such a placement inherently abounds in the language of difference. "Eternal Existence" is already distanced from the in-different plenitude by its insistence upon the contour and form. Eternity which is identified with Imagination is a region where objects originally belong ("Eternity Exists, and All Things in Eternity", *LJ*. K, 614), but this sphere is already under the powerful impact of difference ("In Great Eternity every particular Form gives forth or Emanates its own peculiar Light [...] J. K, 684). Eternity, or Imagination, is **shining forth of an object**, its abrupt and sudden emergence, differentiation from other objects in which it is foregrounded. Shining, understood in the Heideggerian way as **radiance** (each object "emanates its own peculiar Light"), as appearing ("every particular Form **emanates** [...]"), and as a mere appearance, a physical shape of a thing ("every particular Form").

Imagination as a dialogue of separate forms, as a factor indispensable for the development of language which is, as we have already noted, born "out of dispersion", appears also in Derrida's reading of Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*. Analysing Rousseau's text augmented

by fragments of his letters where we come across a very Blakeian sentence "Only imagination is active and one excites the passion only by imagination", Derrida concludes:

[...] reason, a function of interest and need, the technical and calculating faculty, is not the origin of language, which is also a human property and without which there would be no perfectibility. Language is born of the imagination which arouses or at any rate excites sentiment or passion.¹²⁷

It is far from incidental then that in *Jerusalem* it is Los, representing the principle of creative imagination, who erects "the stubborn structure of language". If, however, for Blake and Rousseau, the mastername of the game of interpretation is life, "Eternal Existence", for Derrida the play of distance and images appearing from it is another name for death:

[...]imagination belongs to the same chain of significations as the anticipation of death. Imagination is at bottom the relationship with death. The image is death [...] **the** image is **a** death or **(the)** death is **an** image.¹²⁸

This is not to claim a fundamental, insurmountable gap between the two interpretations of imagination; it is rather to state that Derrida draws the ultimate conclusion which Blake stops short of, although both speak the same language of articulation which Blake calls "Outline" and Derrida *écriture*. What differs these two lessons of writing/drawing/engraving is that while Blake still maintains the notion of the origin, no matter how affected by difference and articulation, and thus adheres to the metaphoricality of breath and sound as closer to the source of Being, Derrida overtly confesses the fundamentally human inability to reach such a point. In a final section of his comments upon Rousseau Derrida defines the driving force of language as:

[...] the power of substituting one organ for another, of articulating space and time, sight and voice, hand and spirit, it is this faculty of supplementarity which is the true "origin" — or nonorigin — of languages: articulation in general, as articulation of nature and of convention, of nature and all its others.¹²⁹

Yet the presence of the significatum is never present in itself. It is present in the effect thus bearing "in itself" as an effect of presence the imprint of another presence, the trace of another trace. Each significatum is therefore also in the position of a significant.

— René Denizot, *Readings*

Truth, i.e. true being, i.e. what is constant and fixed, because it is the petrifying of any single given perspective, is always only an apparentness that has come to prevail, which is to say, it is always error.

— Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*

Could it be that the actual silence is composed of messages that obliterate each other? That the silence is full of contradictory signals from primordial, highly developed civilisations that have long since seen through it all? [...] The galaxies continued to spin, and intergalactic signals became increasingly infrequent. Why bother to signal, when for each message there was probably an anti-signal, a refutation.

— Peter Nilson, *A Labyrinth in which we Are All Lost*

I. The (pre)Face of the Text

¹ H. Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, tr. D. E. Linge, Berkeley 1976, p. 101.

² S. Kofman, *Nietzsche et la métaphore*, Paris 1972, p. 90.

³ F. Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, W. Kaufmann (ed.) New York 1968, p. 451.

⁴ E. Wyschogrod, *Emmanuel Levinas, The Problem of Ethical Metaphysics*, The Hague, 1974, p. 146.

⁵ J. Derrida, *Dissemination*, tr. B. Johnson, Chicago 1981, p. 38.

⁶ F. Jameson, *The Prison House of Language*, Princeton 1970, p. 81.

⁷ V. Shklovsky, *O teorii prozy*, Moscow 1929, p. 192.

⁸ M. McLuhan, Barrington Nevitt "Medium, Meaning, Message", in: *Communications*, 1974, vol. 1, p. 31.

⁹ K. S. Malevich, *Essays on Art. 1915—1928*, tr. Xenia Glowacki-Prus, A. McMillin, Copenhagen 1968, vol. I, p. 74.

¹⁰ R. L. Y. Duguay, "On the Vibrant Body or/from the Collective Unconscious to the Creative Collective Unconscious", in: *Open Letter*, Toronto, Spring 1978, p. 29.

¹¹ P. De Man, *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, New York 1971, p. 143.

¹² D. Theall, *The Medium Is a Rear View Mirror*, Toronto, 1970, p. 246.

¹³ N. O. Brown, *Love's Body*, New York 1966, p. 266.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 259.

¹⁵ H. Gadamer, *Philosophical...*, p. 12.

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II. Voice as Understanding

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²³ M. Heidegger, "The Origin...", in: M. Heidegger, *Poetry...*, p. 60.

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²⁹ J. Derrida, *Marges de la philosophie*, Paris 1972, p. 8.

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- ⁵⁷ J. Derrida, *Marges...*, p. 29.
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- ⁸⁹ J. Bond, *Mazes and Labyrinths of the World*, London 1976, p. 1.
- ⁹⁰ J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*..., p. 86—7.
- ⁹¹ J. Derrida, *Dissemination*..., p. 322.
- ⁹² Ibidem, p. 341.
- ⁹³ Ibidem, p. 342.
- ⁹⁴ Derrida with a typical sense of polysemy and punning will say that in a text there always is a key of the Yale type which, like all keys, both opens and locks, see: J. Derrida, "Living on", in: B. Bloom, P. De Man, J. Derrida, G. Hartman, J. H. Miller, *Deconstruction and Criticism*, New York 1979, p. 146.
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- ¹⁰⁰ J. H. Miller, "Stevens...", p. 995.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibidem, p. 341.
- ¹⁰² J. Derrida, *Dissemination*, p. 177.
- ¹⁰³ Ibidem, p. 268.
- ¹⁰⁴ S. Kofman, *Nietzsche*..., p. 100.
- ¹⁰⁵ K. Axelos, "The Set's Game-Play of Sets", in: *Yale French Studies*, no 58, 1979, p. 96.
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- ¹⁰⁸ Ibidem, p. 86.

III. Drawing as Weltanschauung/Weltanschauung as drawing.

All the quotations from Blake's works come from George Keynes's edition of Blake's *Complete Writings* Oxford 1969, and are signalled by letter "K" and an appropriate page number. The following abbreviations have been used to refer to Blake's particular texts:

Am	<i>America</i>
AnB	<i>Annotations to Bacon's Essays</i>

AnBerk	<i>Annotation's to Berkeley's "Siris"</i>
AnWordsw	<i>Annotation's to Wordsworth's "Poems"</i>
DesCat	<i>Descriptive Catalogue</i>
EG	<i>The Everlasting Gospel</i>
Eur	<i>Europe</i>
FZ	<i>Vala or the Four Zoas</i>
J	<i>Jeruzalem</i>
LJ	<i>A Vision of the Last Judgment</i>
Let	<i>Letters</i>
M	<i>Milton</i>
MHH	<i>The Marriage of Heaven and Hell</i>
ND	<i>Annotations to Boyd's Translation of Dante</i>
OHP	<i>On Homer's Poetry & on Virgil</i>
Pa	<i>Public Address</i>
PPickMs	<i>Poems from Pickering Manuscript</i>
SE	<i>Songs of Experience</i>
SI	<i>Songs of Innocence</i>
SLos	<i>The Song of Los</i>
VDA	<i>Visions of the Daughters of Albion</i>

Another frequent reference in this chapter, Sir Joshua Reynold's *Discourses on Arts*, London 1960, is coded in the text as "R" with a page number.

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³ Ibidem, p. 66.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 249.

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⁶ Ibidem, p. 325.

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⁸ J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, New York 1903, p. 108.

⁹ J. Derrida, *Dissemination...*, p. 133.

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¹² Ibidem, p. 53.

¹³ Ibidem, p. 53

¹⁴ H. Innis, *Empire and Communications*, Toronto 1950, p. 17.

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¹⁸ J. Derrida, *Dissemination...*, p. 44—5.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 69.

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 13.

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²² J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology...*, p. 35.

²³ J. Derrida, *Positions...*, p. 37—8.

²⁴ J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology...*, p. 12.

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- ²⁷ Ibidem, p. 109.
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- ³² S. H. Butcher, *Harvard Lectures on the Originality of Greece*, London 1902, p. 51.
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- ⁴¹ J. Derrida, *Dissemination*..., p. 193.
- ⁴² Reynolds's phrase, see J. Reynolds, *Discourses*..., p. 100.
- ⁴³ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, New York 1962, p. 262.
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- ⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 85.
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- ⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 153.
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- ⁶¹ Ibidem, p. 14.
- ⁶² J. J. Kockelmans, "Language, Meaning and Ek-sistence", in: J. Kockelmans, *On Heidegger and Language*, p. 9.
- ⁶³ J. Derrida, *Dissemination*..., p. 188.
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Streszczenie

Autor stawia sobie dwojakie zadanie. Po pierwsze, usiłuje wprowadzić do badań humanistycznych podstawowe pojęcia zaczerpnięte z filozofii Martina Heideggera (roz. 1) oraz dekonstruktywistycznej filozofii Jacquesa Derridy (roz. 2). Po drugie, po wyjaśnieniu aparatu pojęciowego autor podejmuje próbę jego aplikacji w konkretnych badaniach tekstowych (twórczość Williama Blak'a, roz. 3).

Przedmiotem pracy jest pewien etap ewolucji współczesnej hermeneutyki, która od kategorii metafizycznych, takich jak „początek”, „źródło”, „pierwotny głos”, zmierza w stronę gramatologicznej filozofii rzeczywistości jako strumienia znaków pozbawionego wyraźnego obramowania ontologicznego (Derrida kwestionuje zarówno pojęcie początku jak i końca). Ewolucja ta odpowiada również przekształceniom języka krytyki, który przechodzi od metafory fonetycznej (jak u Heideggera) do metafory skrypturalnej (jak u Derridy). Stąd szczególny nacisk położono na wyjaśnienie podstawowych kategorii filozofii Derridy, takich jak *écriture*, *différance*, *dissemination*, *trace* itd.

Twórczość Williama Blake zostaje poddana działaniu tych właśnie kategorii, przy czym zasadniczą rolę bodźca, jak i motywu przewodniego dalszej

analizy odgrywa Blake'owska teoria malarstwa oparta na silnym przeciwstawieniu rysunku i światłocienia. Stąd rysunek i kontur spełniają w pisarstwie i malarstwie Blake'a zadania nie tylko estetyczne, lecz rozumiane są przede wszystkim jako podstawowe kategorie ontologiczne. Rysunek, kontur są momentem wyłaniania się przedmiotu, grą obecności i nieobecności, pozorowi i rzeczywistości (tutaj autor wykorzystuje spostrzeżenia Heideggera zawarte w jego „Wprowadzeniu do metafizyki”), jak i nieustannej różnicy, wyróżniania się danego przedmiotu spośród innych (tutaj przydatna okazuje się kategoria *différance* Derridy). Pojęcie rysunku jako kategorii filozoficznej wprowadza również w problematykę znaku, znakowości i problemów semiozy, która po szczegółowych analizach okazuje się podatna na Derridiańskie kategorie, takie jak *detour* czy *voile*, gdyż tak Blake, jak i filozofia dekonstruktywistyczna kwestionują jednoznaczność i jednokierunkowość procesów semiotycznych. Hermeneutyka Heideggerowska okazuje się szczególnie użyteczna dla omówienia pism profetycznych Blake'a, w których powraca mit początku, praźródła, czy oryginalnej jedni bytu wspólnej dla osiemnastowiecznego poety i dwudziestowiecznego filozofa.

Тадэуш Славэк

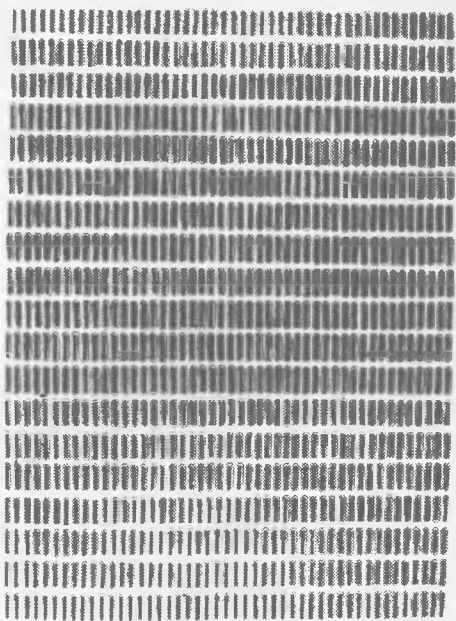
ТЕНЬ, ОДАРЕННАЯ КОНТУРОМ. ФЕНОМЕНОЛОГИЯ, ГРАММАТОЛОГИЯ, БЛЭЙК

Резюме

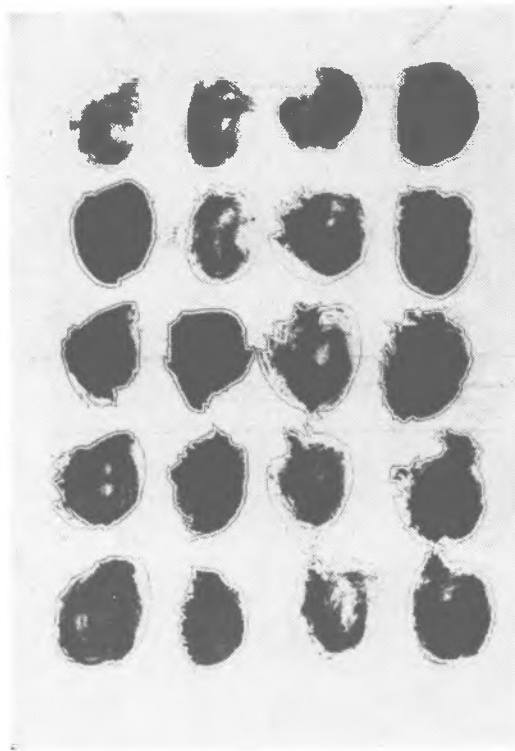
В работе поставлена двойная цель. Во-первых, делается попытка ввести в гуманистические исследования основные понятия, почерпнутые из философии Мартина Хейдеггера (гл. 1) и деконструктивистской философии Жекса Дерриды (гл. 2). Во-вторых, после выяснения понятийного аппарата автор пытается применить его в конкретных текстовых исследованиях (творчество Уильяма Блэйка, гл. 3).

Предметом работы является определенный этап эволюции современной герменевтики, которая от метафизических категорий, как например, „начало“, „источник“, „первичный голос“, направляется в сторону грамматологической философии действительности как потока знаков, лишенного отчетливого онтологического окаймления (Деррида поддает сомнению как понятие начала, так и конца). Эта эволюция отвечает также преобразованию языка критики, который переходит от фонетической метафоры (как у Хейдеггера) к скриптуральной метафоре (как у Дерриды). Поэтому особое внимание уделяется выяснению основных категорий философии Дерриды, как например, *écriture*, *différance*, *dissemination*, *trace* и т. д.

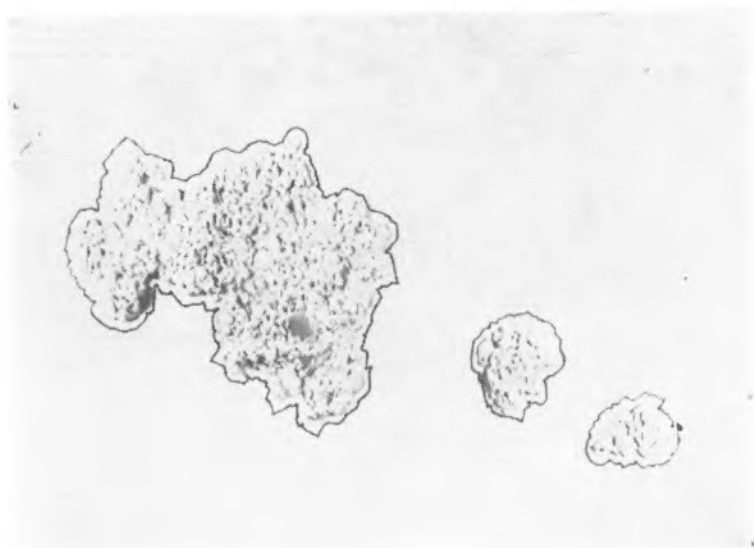
Творчество Уильяма Блэйка подвергнуто влиянию именно этих категорий, причем, основную роль стимула и лейтмотива дальнейшего анализа играет блэйковская теория живописи, основанная на резком противопоставлении рисунка и светотени. Поэтому рисунок и контур исполняют в писательстве и живописи Блэйка не только эстетические задания, но понимаются прежде всего как основные онтологические категории. Рисунок, контур являются моментом выделения предмета, игрой присутствия и отсутствия, мнимого и действительности (здесь автор использует наблюдения Хейдеггера, содержащиеся в его *Введении в метафизику*), а также неутомимого различения, выделения данного предмета среди других (здесь пригодной оказывается категория *différance* Дерриды). Понятие рисунка как философской категории вводит также в проблематику знака, признака и проблем семиоза, которая после подробных анализов оказывается податливой на такие Дерриданские категории, как *detour* или же *voile*, т. к. Блэйк и деконструктивистская философия берут под сомнение однозначность и однонаправленность семиотических процессов. Герменевтика Хейдеггера оказывается особенно полезной для обсуждения профетических произведений Блэйка, в которых возвращается миф начала, первоисточника, оригинального единства быта, общего для поэта восемнадцатого века и философа двадцатого века.



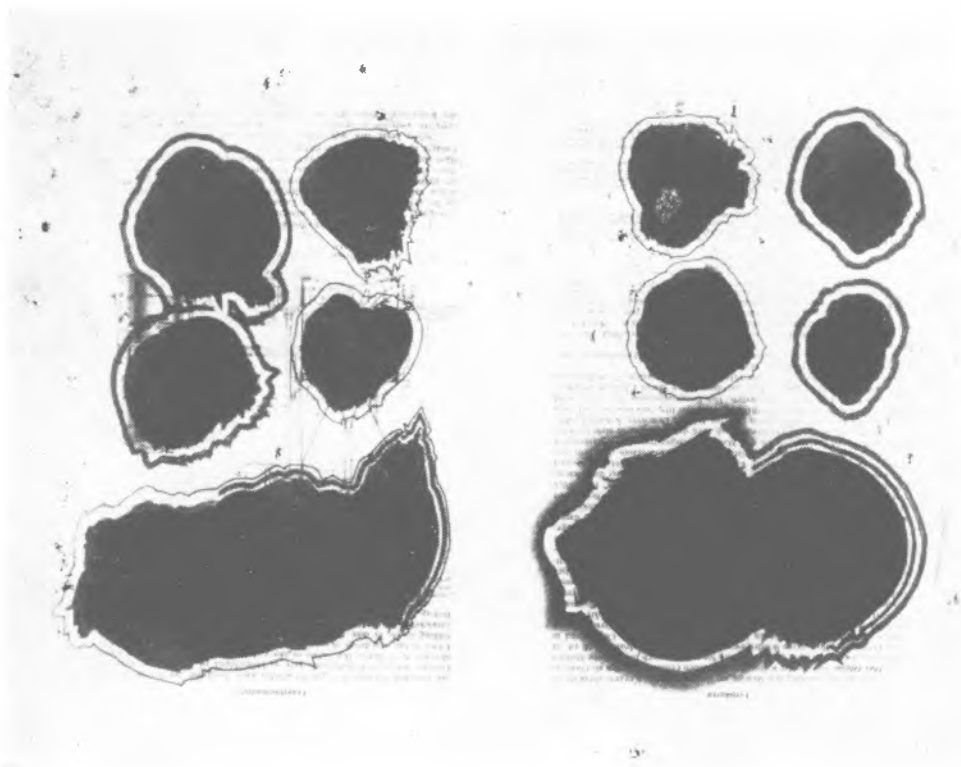
Andrzej Szewczyk, *Adam and Eve* (manuscript)



Andrzej Szewczyk, *Five parts of the world*



Andrzej Szewczyk, *The promised land is a little like the promised cloud*



Andrzej Szewczyk, *Alchemy* (manuscript)

The author wants to express his gratitude to Mr. Andrzej Szewczyk, the most Blakeian Polish painter, for his kind permission to use his works as the illustration to this book. Nowhere can we find a more ontological use of contour that in his works.

BUS

Tadeusz Sławek
„THE OUTLINED SHADOW”

WYKAZ WAŻNIEJSZYCH BŁĘDÓW DOSTRZEŻONYCH W DRUKU

Strona	Wiersz		Jest	Powinno być
	od góry	od dołu		
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11	23		conside	consider
13	8		sence	sense
14	9		Spano's	Spanos'
20		16	VIX	XIX
27	9		unifished	unfinished
35	5		labirynt	labyrinth
40	19		labirynt	labyrinth
46	14		labiryntian	labyrinthine
47		20	unproductive	unproductive
50	15		beaurocratization	bureaucratization
51		16	writtem	written
63		9	his	this
66	5		tropiqus	tropiques
69	13		reffered	reffered to
70	4		desparate	desperate
79	3		belance	balance
89		16	pereived	perceived
102		9	is	it
104	5		in	it
107		21	methaphor	metaphor
107		15	eradicated	eradicated
113	2		aposition	opposition
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130		8	13	14
132	7		paralled	parallel
133	12		Inni's	Innis'



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